

1997 • THE INDEPENDENT
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THE INDEPENDENT

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WEDNESDAY 6 AUGUST 1997

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(R 45p) 40p

NEWS PAGE 9

**BLAST-OFF
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TABLOID PAGE 9

**WIN A MEZZO
DINNER PARTY
IN YOUR HOME**



Top pay plan for super teachers

Colin Brown and Lucy Ward

A radical restructuring of teachers' pay to create a new class of highly-skilled "superteachers" and raise standards in schools will be outlined by the Government today.

The new pay framework will reward expert staff who wish to stay in the classroom but who at present are offered no financial incentive to do so.

But David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, will make it clear in evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body, which makes recommendations on pay in the New Year, that he does not want the extra £835m allocated for schools in England in the Budget to be swallowed up in high pay awards.

He will warn the pay body that a high award would not allow the Government to fulfill its commitments to reduce class sizes and invest in more books and equipment.

In addition to the "superteacher" category, there will be moves to gear the pay award to close the gap between primary school teachers, who are regarded as relatively poorly paid, and secondary school teachers. The review body will be asked to raise primary school teachers' salaries to improve recruitment.

The body will also be asked to consider how work carried out by teachers outside school hours, such as supervising after-school homework clubs, can be reflected in salaries.

This year's pay settlement will spill over into next year's award because the second part of this year's pay award comes into effect in December, with a £75m increase next year.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, is expected to reinforce the message about affordability in a letter to all public sector pay review bodies in September. Pay rises will have to be paid for out of productivity, he will say.

Mr Blunkett will be keen to balance the tough line on pay restraint with a positive approach to develop ways of structuring pay to improve standards.

The proposed "advanced skills teacher" grade, the most radical change to the current pay structure, will offer teachers committed to remaining in the classroom the chance to gain higher salaries in recognition of their expertise.

Ministers are concerned that, at present, many of the best teachers are

forced to seek non-teaching responsibilities which reduce their time in the classroom in order to gain salary increments.

The current pay ceiling for a classroom teacher with no additional responsibilities is £21,318, irrespective of age and experience. Newly qualified staff just starting out in the profession earn just over £14,000.

Teachers in primary schools have less opportunity than their secondary school counterparts to boost their salaries at present because there are fewer extra responsibilities available.

Mr Blunkett will emphasise that the Government wants the best teachers to keep their jobs. The Government is seeking to link them to professorships in universities and to undertake research.

The Government believes that some of the extra £835m will have to be made available for pay, but it is keen to promote its pledges to reduce class sizes, spend more on books and equipment, and give particular attention to where it is most needed.

Sources have indicated that no more than £300m of the Budget windfall should go on meeting the pay award. The Local Government Association

suggested last month that £400m would be needed to fund an inflation-linked award.

Teaching unions have consistently backed the idea of a new "master teacher" grade. However, the National Union of Teachers, the country's largest teaching union, last night claimed the Government was "going about things back to front" by asking about things back to front by asking the pay review body to advise on salaries for such staff without first defining what their responsibilities would be.

The NUT general secretary, Doug McAvoy, said: "The Government is asking for a decision on how these teachers should be paid before deciding what the job entails. This is not a matter for the review body."

More detail was needed on what such teachers would do and how they would be selected. The union wants to see open competition within schools for master teacher posts, rather than appointment by heads.

Teaching unions insist pay remains a key issue in raising the status of the profession. Most claimed higher pay would do more to raise morale than the knighthoods for successful heads being proposed by Tony Blair.



Affairs of state: Prince Charles shaking hands with Dr George Carey during a visit to Canterbury Cathedral

Carey warns of crisis if Charles marries Camilla

Kim Sengupta

The Archbishop of Canterbury yesterday broke his silence on whether the Prince of Wales should marry Camilla Parker Bowles by declaring that such a step would plunge the Church of England into crisis.

Dr George Carey's comments made it clear that while there was no objection to the divorced Prince succeeding to the throne, the situation would be significantly different if he remarried.

The Archbishop's sudden intervention was greeted with surprise by constitutional observers, who warned of a damaging conflict between the State and the Church if he tried to block a second marriage by Prince Charles.

Government sources let it be known

recently that the Prime Minister would be sympathetic to any future marriage. Peter Mandelson, the Minister Without Portfolio, is believed to have had a number of meetings with the Prince, as well as having dinner with Mrs Parker Bowles. And Dr Tony Wright, the PPS to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, said that he did not believe the "sky would fall in" if Prince Charles wanted to remarry.

The Archbishop was speaking at a press conference while attending the 150th anniversary of the Australian Anglican Church in Sydney. He was asked "Do you think Camilla Parker Bowles would make a good queen?" He responded that all that the Prince has to be the next heir to the throne. So the very fact he is divorced is not an issue.

He added: "Now it is true that remarriage would create a crisis for the church - this is well known".

Dr Carey pointed out that the Prince had given no indication that he wanted to remarry following his divorce.

Lambeth Palace tried to play down his remarks on the matter. A spokeswoman said Dr Carey was simply reiterating the well-known opposition of the Church to divorces remarrying while their original partner is still alive.

The chances of the Church accepting the Prince remarrying is thought to have been increased by the fact Dr Carey had blessed the remarriages of both his divorced children. But the Lambeth Palace spokeswoman said: "He has also refused to bless many others. This depends entirely on individual circumstances."

200 feared dead in Jumbo disaster

John Carlin
in Washington
and Kate Watson Smyth,
Kim Sengupta
London

A Korean Air jumbo jet Boeing 747 with at least 231 people aboard - including three infants - crashed last night on the Pacific island of Guam. First reports said that 29 had survived. The aircraft was coming into land at Agaña International airport when, three miles out, the pilot lost contact with the control tower.

Flight 801 from Seoul, the capital of South Korea, to the tiny United States colony came down at 2.35am local time (17.35 BST) in a hilly, rugged area, according to officials at Agaña airport. Emergency services struggled to get to the scene in the night, hampered by the terrain and bad weather.

Witnesses quoted on US television reported hearing an explosion and then seeing a fireball in the sky. Aviation experts in Washington were speculating yesterday that the aircraft could have suffered engine problems or that the pilot might have lost his bearings on a dark and rainy night.

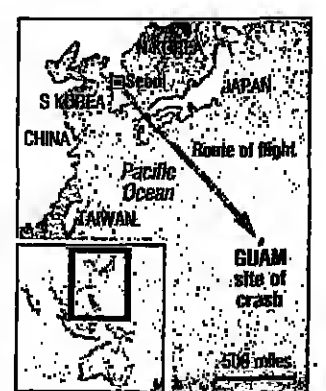
"It rained off and on all day, but it's too early to say if weather was a factor," an airport spokesman said, who added that there was widespread fire on the ground.

Boeing last night sent a team of specialists to the site of the crash. The aircraft 747-300 was delivered to Korean Air in December 1984.

Vernon Gorse, a former official with the National Transport Safety Board which immediately

also sent a team to investigate the accident, said: "Guam is a very small island and as the plane had already been cleared to land, we know that the navigation system was working all right. They came within sight of the airport and then the plane impacted with the ground."

"It is raining there and if there are heavy storms it is possible that the plane could have been struck by lightning or it could be that there was some turbulence."



Largest of the Marianas, east of the Philippines, Guam is one of the most important strategic bases abroad for the US military with more than one-third of its usable land used by the air force and navy. The US has 2,500 military personnel at Anderson air force base, plus naval facilities on the island, which is used as a staging base and for logistics support for US and Allied operations in the Pacific Basin.

Guam has also been developed as a tourist resort, and is particularly popular with Japanese visitors. As a Pacific destination it is second only to Hawaii.

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Exotic plumage: The Connex South Central uniform

Railmen not so chirpy over new plumage

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Apparently it gets worse at night when drink has been taken. The male employees at Connex South Central train company seem to bear the brunt. There are comments about their sexuality and claims that they resemble technicolour gendarmes or brightly coloured birds - budgerigars more often than not.

The most popular suggestion, however, is that their uniforms are of a kind usually found in the properties department of the D'Oyly Carte opera company in the section marked "Pirates of Penzance".

The employees of Connex South Central are seriously bored with shouts of "which is Long John Silver?" and "Where's your parrot?"

The vestments of the long-suffering station staff are, shall

we say, an acquired taste. The more toffee-nosed passengers commuting into London from Sussex might even venture that they were a touch vulgar.

Conservative black trousers and blazers in a relatively quiet blue are enlivened with a lighter blue hat with yellow braid plus a bright yellow waistcoat.

The company seems to be rather precious about the uniform and woe betide any em-

ployee who sheds a garment without authorisation.

The rail workers' union, RMT, reports that a number of employees have been disciplined for failing to wear a hat and at least one has been issued with a "final warning".

Employees complain that in the greenhouse conditions of some stations such as Brighton, which are covered in glass, removal of the head gear is the only means to avoid expiring in

the manner beloved of guardsmen. Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the union, conceded that changes in uniform were always controversial with staff, but he argued that insufficient consultation took place over the Connex get-up. A spokesman said the Gallic-looking headgear could be removed "but staff have to receive authorisation and conditions have to be Equatorial".

No-holiday bonus, page 6



32

Simon sells £2m BP shares
The trade minister, Lord Simon, announced that he was selling his £2m shares in BP in a climbdown to end attacks on the Government over his alleged conflict of interests.

THE BROADSHEET
Business & City 16-20
Foreign News 8-10
Home News 2-7
Sport 21-24
Leading articles, letters 13
Fashion 12

THE TABLOID
Arts reviews 15
Features 6-9
Listings 16-17
Travel 10
Radio & TV 19-20
Weather 18

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Page 3

news

significant shorts

Cook says his wife behaved nobly over affair revelations

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook last night said he had "behaved badly" towards his wife - whom he is leaving after revelations of an affair - and that she had behaved "nobly".

In a statement he apologised for the "public hounding" their marriage split had brought her, and asked that she now be left in privacy. His statement was issued in response to one his wife, Margaret, put out on Monday, in which she said: "Whatever my husband's private life may have been, he has always been a very good Member of Parliament and is a very good Foreign Secretary."

Second Doncaster official suspended

A senior official has been suspended from a council at the centre of a police fraud investigation, it was confirmed yesterday.

Assistant planning director Graham Raynor, 46, is the second senior officer to be suspended by Labour-controlled Doncaster Council. Chief executive Doug Hale was suspended in April and has now taken early retirement. The suspension of Mr Raynor, 46, follows allegations that he secretly supported a landowner's planning application to build houses on protected green-belt land.

Lib Dems warn: Don't get sick today

The Liberal Democrats declared today "National Don't Get Sick" day to draw attention to the shortage of doctors on wards.

A former junior doctor, Liberal Democrat MP Dr Evan Harris, said today that in hospitals all over Britain junior doctors would be taking to the wards, and they would be unsupervised. Hospital doctors call this "Don't Get Sick" day because they hope pressures on freshers are not too great, said Dr Harris, a junior doctor in Liverpool and Oxford before he became a registrar. Colin Brown

Vic and Bob's 'Omnibus' treatment



Comedians Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer will be analysed in a forthcoming Omnibus, BBC1's arts documentary series.

The Shooting Stars pair will be dissected by contemporaries Jonathan Ross, Mark Lammert, Ulrika Jansson, Jim Davidson, Terry Jones and Sting.

"Too soon for a Vic and Bob documentary? I would say if anything it is late," BBC director of television Alan Yentob said yesterday.

Waterways Board fined £18,000

The Government's British Waterways Board was fined £18,000 yesterday for allowing a farm to take too much irrigating water from a canal. The prosecution was brought by another arm of Government, the Environment Agency.

Derby magistrates heard that, despite a warning letter, the waterways board continued to allow Trent Valley Growers Ltd to take more water than its licence allowed from the Trent and Mersey Canal at Barrow-on-Trent last summer. The firm was fined £3,600. Nicholas Schoon

Derek Hammond-Stroud, OBE

Contrary to the impression given in the article "Make Mine a G&S" in the Weekend section on Saturday, the baritone Derek Hammond-Stroud, OBE, is alive and well, although retired from the stage. Our apologies to him (and his many friends and pupils) for any distress caused.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	£5.00	Belgium	£5.00	Canada	£5.00	France	£5.00	Germany	£5.00	Greece	£5.00	Italy	£5.00	Japan	£5.00	Netherlands	£5.00	Portugal	£5.00	Spain	£5.00	Sweden	£5.00	Switzerland	£5.00	USA	£5.00	UK	£5.00
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people



Viscount Cobham and Lisa Clayton: Wedding plans only known to immediate circle

Lord and yachtswoman tie the marriage knot

Viscount Cobham, the landowner whose ex-wife, Penelope, left him for the former Cabinet minister David Mellor, has married Lisa Clayton, the round-the-world yachtswoman, it emerged yesterday. The couple, whose romance was known only to their immediate circle, are now taking their honeymoon in Scotland. The quiet ceremony last Friday was the first at the exclusive aristocrat's family seat, Hagley Hall, near Birmingham, since it was granted a licence to hold weddings.

Only handful of guests were present, including the bride's parents, Dan and Gwen, of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. They were unavailable for comment yesterday.

It is believed the romance blossomed after Miss Clayton's catering firm, Westcote Ventures, won a contract to provide corporate hospitality at the state home several months ago.

A spokesman for Hagley Hall said Viscount Cobham, 54, and Miss Clayton, 38, will live there on a permanent basis.

Peter Harding, Miss Clayton's former business partner, who helped organise her round-the-world voyage, said he had no idea the couple were getting married. "I had heard rumours about a relationship between the two of them but Lisa is a very private person and there are some things you don't ask about. Although I had no idea she was getting married until after the ceremony, I have to say it was no great surprise."

Viscount Cobham, who lists cricket and shooting as his principle interests in *Who's Who*, was granted

a divorce two years ago on the grounds of his 43-year-old wife's adultery.

She left him nearly three years ago for Mr Mellor, chairman of the Government's new Football Task Force. They now live together at his luxury home near Tower Bridge in London.

At the time of the divorce, Viscount Cobham was said to be deeply upset and claimed he had no knowledge of his wife's affair until Mr Mellor made a statement. The Conservative MP had already split up with his twin wife after an affair with the actress Antonia de Sancho.

Viscount Cobham had been married for 20 years but had no children.

Miss Clayton entered the record books after becoming the first woman to sail non-stop around the world in her yacht *The Spirit of Birmingham* in 1995.

During the 31,000-mile voyage, which took 286 days, she battled with mountainous waves, gale-force winds and twice capsized her boat. On the second occasion, she sent a message back to Birmingham asking the people of the city to pray for her.

But she survived and returned to face allegations of cheating. She was asked to provide the World Sailing Record Speed Council with all her written logs for ratification. No action was taken and the record stood.

Since then she has been awarded a Doctorate of Science from Birmingham University, appeared on *This is Your Life* and two weeks ago was given the Freedom of the City of Birmingham.

Kate Watson-Smyth

Lumley and Palin go round the world for Auntie

Joanna Lumley and Michael Palin, whose globe-trotting adventures proved to be ratings winners for the BBC, will be off on their television travels again this autumn.

Miss Lumley is to retrace a Himalayan journey her grandparents made in 1931. The programmes follow a series showing how she coped with the hardships of life on a desert island, which proved popular with viewers last year.

Michael Palin, regarded as the most affable television travel guide, is to undertake a trip around the Pacific Rim, in a series called *Full Circle*.

Elsewhere in the BBC1 autumn schedule the channel is likely to provoke some controversy, with a daring drama about the amorous encounters of a young prince at Cambridge, and a series of documentaries exploring the history of modern Irish republicanism.

But, in case defenders of the constitutional status quo are provoked into withholding their licence fee, the corporation will



also commemorate Remembrance Sunday with an affectionate portrait of the Chelsea Pensioners.

Launching the line-up at Television Centre yesterday, the BBC's director of television, Alan Yentob, steadfastly denied that *The Prince of Hearts* (starring Robson Green and Tara Fitzgerald) was about Prince Edward, who studied at Jesus College, Cambridge.

"It's a piece of pure fiction. Just enjoy it," Mr Yentob told reporters, explaining away the choice of location lightheartedly: "You wouldn't want to base it in Birmingham or Bromley, would you?"

Mr Yentob turned more tense when dealing with *Provos*, a documentary study of the IRA's "armed struggle".

"The BBC will be careful to en-



sure it is not a propaganda coup for the Provisionals," he stated wearily, pointing out that four former Northern Ireland secretaries had agreed to be interviewed.

The producer of the programmes - to be presented by a seasoned chronicler of the conflict, Peter Taylor - also claims to have gained unprecedented access to leading republicans.

The BBC will also mark its 75th anniversary this autumn by screening a major history series about itself, *Auntie - The Story of the BBC*, made by an independent production company.

The series promises to offer insight into the battles between BBC management and the Thatcher government.

Rob Brown

Neil Hamilton granted public sleaze hearing

Neil Hamilton, the former Tory MP at the centre of the cash-for-questions row, will get his "day in court". The Commons standards watchdog yesterday granted Mr Hamilton his request for a televised hearing in which he can put his case to them personally.

He will be called to give an oral statement and be questioned by the Standards and Privileges Committee at the Commons on 14 October, two weeks before the House returns from its summer break.

But Mr Hamilton will be required to take the rare step of swearing an oath before being cross-examined by the committee. Yesterday's decision by the committee, which had hoped to complete its inquiries quickly, means the saga will drag on into the autumn.

It is thought Mr Hamilton will be only the second

MP to take the oath when giving evidence to a Commons select committee.

The first was the former Tory minister Andrew Mitchell when earlier this year he gave evidence to the old standards committee over his role in an early investigation into sleaze claims. Mr Mitchell lost his Gedling seat at the general election.

The committee's decision came after a two-and-a-half hour meeting in the Commons, for which MPs were recalled from their summer break.

It is considering the report of Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, Sir Gordon Downey, which was published last month.

Sir Gordon found "compelling" evidence that Mr Hamilton accepted cash payments from Harrods boss Mohamed el-Fayed in return for lobbying services.

briefing

SCIENCE

Universities accused of 'grotesque' experiments

Ten universities have been accused of "grotesque and pointless" scientific research, for carrying out psychology experiments on monkeys, chickens, rats and gerbils.

Top of the hit-list compiled by the pressure group Animal Aid is Bolton Institute of Higher Education, where an experiment was carried out in which six monkeys were taught a maze and then intentionally given brain damage by drilling a hole through their skulls. Other experiments separated gerbils from their life-long partners to investigate depression, and cut off rats' whiskers to see how sensory deprivation affected the brain.

Andrew Tyler, director of Animal Aid, said: "Psychology experiments on animals cause incalculable suffering, and the sterile conditions of the laboratory can never replicate the complex environmental factors surrounding human anxiety and depression."

The group is also seeking the permanent revocation of the animal experimentation licence awarded by the Home Office to Huntingdon Life Sciences, after a Channel 4 documentary shown in March allegedly showed beagles at the company being violently shaken and punched.

The universities were named in the Animal Aid Mad Science Awards, and the nominated universities will tomorrow receive a statuette featuring a beagle being stabbed by a scalpel. According to Home Office statistics, nearly 30,000 animals were used in psychological research in 1996, an increase of 7 per cent over 1995. Charles Arthur

TOURISM

Royal palaces cost taxpayer £6.7m

Upkeep of the historic Royal palaces, including the Tower of London (below) and Hampton Court, cost the taxpayer £6.7m last year. The bill for new facilities - which will mean tourists can get a cup of tea at the Tower for the first time - helped to send the Government body running the palaces further into the red.

The annual report and accounts of the Historic Royal Palaces agency, presented to Parliament yesterday, shows a net operating deficit of £7.5m in 1997, compared with £4.5m in 1996.

However, the agency has raised the amount of income generated from £12m to £25m in the seven years it has been responsible for the palaces. It has also halved the proportion of its expenditure borne by the taxpayer from 35 per cent to 17 per cent.

Chief executive David Beeton said: "The palaces have always required subsidy from the taxpayer and [the] subsidy for last year is significantly lower than the subsidy that we inherited."

He added that there was "a possibility" the agency might not have to draw upon the taxpayer by the turn of the century, providing the tourist industry remains buoyant and fears of a recession prove unfounded.



HEALTH

Cuts jeopardise dental care

Budget cuts are seriously threatening the dental health of adults and children with special needs, says a report published today. Dentists called on the Government to restore funding for the "safety-net" service that is meant to help people unable to use a normal general dental practitioner.

A survey of hospital-based community dentists found more than half those questioned said their budget had been cut since 1994.

The Community Dental Service (CDS) provides dental care for people with special needs, like those with learning difficulties, the elderly, disabled and terminally ill. It provides school screening and dental health promotion and education.

The BDA survey showed one in five community dentists believed cuts were affecting the dental care of those with mental health problems. One in four thought the dental care of patients with learning difficulties was being compromised and more than a third said their trust had closed community health surgeries.

A total of 112 community health service dentists from 200 trusts throughout the UK took part in the BDA survey.

GENETICS

Exercise makes heart 'grow'

A gene has been discovered that appears to make the heart grow at a startling rate in response to strenuous physical exercise. The hearts of Army recruits with the gene variant showed 25 times more growth than those without it at the end of a tough 10 week training course, researchers said yesterday.

The scientists were so astonished by their findings that it took them a whole year to ensure they had not made a mistake. They still do not know if they have found a "Rambo" gene that creates super-fit soldiers - or something signifying just the opposite.

It may be that bigger hearts are produced in weaker individuals to help their bodies cope with the physical demands placed on them.

In people with high blood pressure, such heart growth can cause a condition called left ventricular hypertrophy which may double the chances of a heart attack or stroke. Researchers think identifying the gene - a special version of an already known gene called "ACE" - might lead to new methods of treatment.

MOTORS

German is best, say British drivers

The dream cars for Britain's drivers are German marques, such as Audi, BMW and Mercedes, a motorist survey has shown. About 300 car-owners, representing a range of occupations, regions and ages, were questioned for the poll, revealing a surprising variety of car preferences.

The survey, published this month by Critical Research Ltd, claims that most men choose Mercedes as their favourite car, whilst women preferred Audi or BMWs.

The choice of colour, however, which is said to reflect the personality of the driver, was unaffected by gender. One in five drivers picked blue as their colour of choice, with red and green also scoring highly. Under-35s bucked the trend, with a clear preference for black. Louise Hancock

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سكنا من الامارات

BP shares surge, page 17
Investment column, page 18

"NOW THAT INTEREST RATES ARE RISING, I'M THINKING OF USING MY SAVINGS TO GET A REGULAR MONTHLY INCOME. IS THE RATE ON INCOME BONDS GOING UP?"

DOROTHY STON, CAMBRIDGE.

LIZ ANDERSON
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Accused: From left; Tim Carter, Steven Girvan, Roger Bell and Steven Wolstencroft, who have been charged with grievous bodily harm

Assault case tarnishes army's image in the sun

Ian Burrell

With its garish pubs, seaside shops selling football strips from the English Premiership and cafes offering bacon and eggs for breakfast, the Cypriot resort of Ayia Napa has become a summer home-from-home for thousands of British tourists.

The incident on Saturday came a month after army chiefs lifted a ban on troops visiting the resort.

Roger Bell, 26, Tim Carter, 27, Steven Wolstencroft, 26, and Steven Girvan, 20 — all of junior ranks and serving in the First Battalion of the King's Regiment, which is based on the island, were charged with grievous bodily harm.

They are accused of assaulting Shane Bell, 27, and Barry Ford, 23, two tourists from south London. Police say Mr Bell's jaw was broken in two places and Mr Ford's wrist was broken. The judge, sitting in the nearby town of Larnaca, postponed the case to tomorrow and ordered the soldiers, who are under close arrest in barracks, to pay bail of 2,000 Cypriot pounds (£2,600).

The case will further damage a resort still reeling from the publicity surrounding the case of Janette Pink, the British divorcee infected with the AIDS virus by a fisherman from Ayia Napa.

The fisherman, Pavlos Georgiou, was last week sentenced to 15 months in prison by a Cypriot court for deliberately giving her AIDS.

But it is the behaviour of the British troops in Ayia Napa which threatens to destroy the resort's appeal to holidaymakers. Three years ago Louise Jensen, a Danish tour guide, was killed by three drunken members of the Royal Green Jackets, who are serving life sentences. The killing led to an Army ban on soldiers' visits to Ayia Napa. It was gradually relaxed, and in July this year all restrictions were lifted.

But two months ago a separate ban on all training visits to Cyprus by the Royal Marines was introduced after three Marines were arrested at an Ayia Napa pub dancing and singing "God Save the Queen" in the nude.

Yesterday Mervyn Wynne-Jones, British Army spokesman in Cyprus, said the latest incident had resulted in a further ban on the 600-strong unit to which the four accused men be-

long. He said: "Off-duty, out-of-bounds restrictions in the resort of Ayia Napa have been reimposed upon the unit concerned."

Air Vice Marshal Peter Millar, the British Commander-in-Chief in Cyprus, was said to view this latest incident with "considerable concern". There are 3,500 British troops stationed on the island at two bases which are designated Crown property but whose legal status is being challenged by Cypriot lawyers.

Political pressure is mounting for the Army to leave the island, which gained its independence from Britain in 1960. Cypriot authorities fear any incident which results in the death of a local would result in a bloody backlash.

Where the Army meets Club 18-30, page 15



Victim: Barry Ford with his girlfriend, Sacha Wright

Photograph: Reuters

Scottish parties in 'unholy alliance' to secure parliament

Stephen Goodwin

At a symbolic first meeting yesterday, Scottish Nationalists sat down at the same table as Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians to plan how to secure maximum support for an Edinburgh parliament, complete with tax powers.

All three parties are now represented on the executive of Scotland Forward, the non-partisan umbrella group co-ordinating the campaign for Yes votes in the referendum on 11 September.

However, the strain in the new-found unity between the parties has quickly begun to

show. Kay Ullrich, a former election candidate and one of the three new SNP members of the Scotland Forward team, yesterday came under attack from Jim Stevens, an economist and member of Labour's Scottish executive. In a BBC radio interview, Mr Stevens questioned the wisdom of working

alongside an avowedly pro-independence party. Though Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, has said he is "absolutely delighted" at the SNP's participation, other senior Labour figures believe some voters who support limited devolution could be scared into the "No"

camp if the nationalists trumpet the parliament as a first step to independence.

The anti-home rule "Think Twice" lobby was quick to exploit the cracks in what they regard as an unholy alliance. Brian Monteith, the Think Twice co-ordinator, said people should ask themselves why the

SNP thought the parliament was worth backing.

"The Labour and SNP agendas are quite separate. But Labour so desperately need SNP support on 11 September that they are prepared to go along with a high-risk strategy they know could lead to independence," Mr Monteith said.

Two SNP representatives, Ms Ullrich and the former MP George Reid, were welcomed on board at yesterday's Scotland Forward strategy meeting. A third SNP figure, Alex Neil, the party's vice co-ordinator for policy, will also be joining the executive.

With the referendum taking place on an aging electoral register, some 400,000 people are no longer living at the address they were on the relevant date in October 1996.

However people who have moved are entitled to vote in the areas where they have registered. A publicity campaign on postal voting got underway this week.

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news

Crunch time looms for road tax dodgers

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Motorists who dodge road tax face having their vehicles crushed or sold at auction in a government crackdown launched yesterday. Cars without vehicle excise duty discs will be clamped, then possibly towed away and crushed if not claimed within five weeks.

The Driver and Vehicle Li-

censing Agency, the government department that deals with vehicle registration, convinced ministers to act after the cost to the taxpayer topped £175m a year.

The Government has planned a two-week media campaign to warn drivers who have neglected to buy a disc that they face the new penalties. From 18 August, wheelclamping contractors will seek out

road tax cheats and clamp their vehicles. Car owners will have to pay £88 to get the clamp removed and will also have to show a valid tax disc.

Vehicles will be towed away and impounded if not claimed within 24 hours. After that, the release fee goes up and if vehicles stay unclaimed for five weeks, they will be destroyed or sold at auction.

"We are determined to clamp

down hard on this irresponsible group who evade paying their road tax," said Hayden Madoc, DVLA head of enforcement.

"Law-abiding motorists have nothing to fear, but road tax cheats should beware as they could end up carless and penniless," said Mr Madoc.

The enforcement activity will cover the whole of London to start with – but officials say that it will be extended to cover the

country by the end of next year.

A three-month pilot scheme last year in five London boroughs netted more than £2m in additional revenue. More than 500 vehicles were clamped, of which nearly 60 per cent were unclaimed and were either crushed or auctioned.

Baroness Hayman, the roads minister, said: "Being caught in this clampdown will certainly hit the pockets of road tax dodgers

much harder than the cost of a vehicle excise licence. Honest motorists are fed up with seeing the hard core who continually evade paying their road tax."

The minister made it clear that punitive action would not be taken against drivers who forgot to renew their tax disc.

"We are out to deter the evader with the threat of inconvenience, large fines and prosecution. We will not be

penalising those whose tax disc has fallen off the windscreen or are a few days late renewing their tax. Law-abiding motorists have nothing to fear."

Motoring organisations welcomed the new initiative. The AA said the clamping campaign would also help to reduce the number of uninsured drivers on the roads. Andrew Howard, the AA's head of road safety, said: "There are about 2 million

uninsured drivers and most are also untaxed as they cannot buy the tax disc without an insurance certificate. Their selfishness affects all other motorists, because about £10 is added to average car insurance premium to cover the cost of uninsured drivers."

"Under this new scheme, those drivers who are clamped must buy road tax – and therefore insurance – before they get their vehicle back."

Geordie brew is just the ticket for ale prize

Michael Jackson

It is a beer which may cause trouble for some, but it has brought success for two brothers from Tyneside.

Workie Ticket is a Geordie expression for troublemaker and that is the name the Fawson brothers gave the bitter which yesterday won the Championship Beer of Britain prize at the Great British Beer Festival.

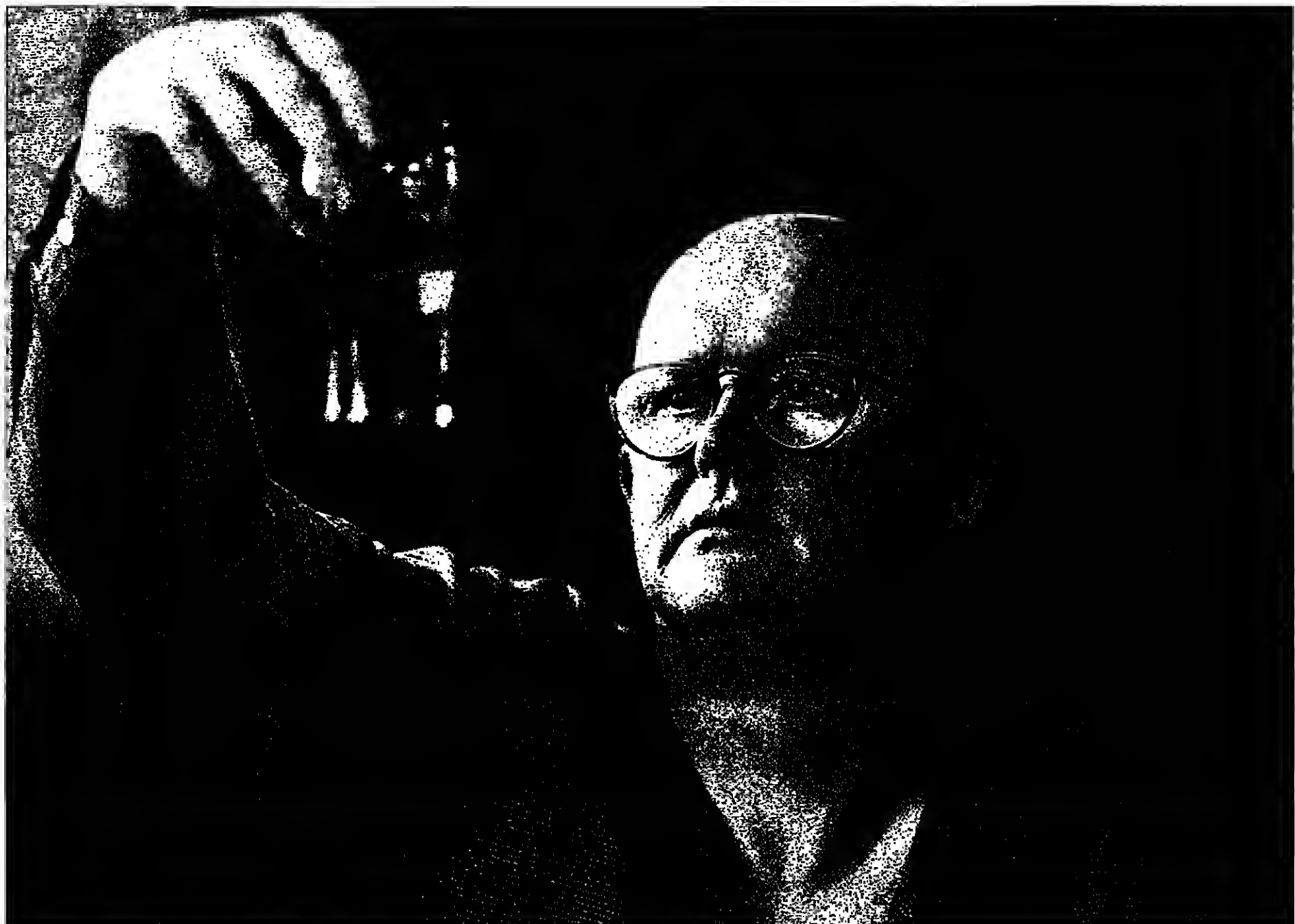
Matthew Fawson, a 23-year-old brewer with no formal training, runs the tiny Mordue brewery at Wallsend on Tyneside with his 34-year-old brother Gary.

They were originally homebrewers, but decided to turn professional just over two years ago when Matthew could not find a job after art school. Gary, also a graduate, was working as a railway signaller.

They were further encouraged in their profession when they discovered that their house had in the 1800s been a brewery, run by a man called Joseph Mordue – whose name they borrowed for their business.

Gary sold his car to help set up the business. Matthew spend five days studying brewing with a consultant.

Their brewery has three times won best of show at the Newcastle Beer Festival in a region where brewing has recently regained some of its past reputation. Matthew proclaimed himself "submerged" to win the national event at Olympia in London. "I'll probably make some really good beer when I'm 40," he said.



Smooth head: A judge sampling one of the hopeful entrants at the Great British Beer Festival at Olympia in London yesterday

Photograph: Philip Meech

Tasting Workie Ticket blindfold as a judge yesterday, I found it lively and grassy in its hop aroma; with a sweetish, malty, palate, and an appetising, nutty, dryness in the finish. It

was so appetising that I inadvertently drank all of my half-pint tasting sample before writing down my critique and score. I had to ask for seconds for that purpose. Without a

blindfold, two years earlier, I had in my own writing commended the same beer for its maltness, nuttiness and balance. The other judges, a long-es-

tablished brewery owner, a brewing scientist, two drinks writers and an activist of the Campaign for Real Ale, all favoured Workie Ticket. There was also strong support for

winner of the second prize, Bateman's Dark Mild, from an old-established brewery near Skegness, Lincolnshire. Third was the Best Bitter of another newish brewery, Boson's found-

ed in 1993 in Worcestershire. There were also awards for a bottled beer, Hop Back Summer Lightning, from Salisbury, Wiltshire, and a lager, Schiehallion, from Dollar, Scotland.

Fees may be waived for medical students

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Some medical students are expected to be given bursaries to help them pay £1,000-a-year tuition fees after intervention by Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, over the Dearing report.

The Health Secretary is to hold talks with the Treasury and the Education Secretary, David Blunkett, over the bursaries, after protests by doctors and dentists' leaders that the fees could deepen a shortage of medical graduates. He has privately told officials that some medical students should be given bursaries after the third year of their course. The details have to be agreed with the Treasury in time for an education fees white paper in the Autumn, but it is likely the bursaries will be limited to specialist areas where there are clear shortages.

Mr Blunkett announced on

24 July that students' maintenance grants would be converted into loans repayable when the students began earning. That would leave most students with a debt of over £10,000 after a three-year course. There would also be tuition fees of £1,000 a year for those whose parents earn £35,000. Medical students who have courses lasting five or six years would face debts ranging up to an estimated £20,000.

In spite of criticism, Mr Blunkett managed to win widespread support for the controversial plan from universities. But the Government has so far failed to respond to a key recommendation in the Dearing report it should pick up the bill for students with courses lasting more than three years, including medical and teaching students.

Mr Dobson has told Cabinet colleagues the NHS is the biggest employer of graduates, but it is not a high payer, and could face increasing difficulties recruiting unless a compromise is agreed over the tuition fees for medical students.

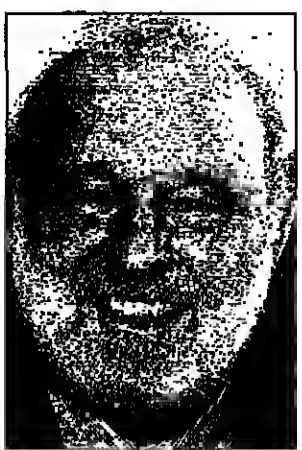
The British Dental Association has written to all MPs, urging them to support bursaries for dental students and is due to meet Baroness Blackstone, the education minister in the Lords. The BMA is also campaigning and yesterday the Liberal Democrats backed the demands for bursaries.

Figures showing a "crisis" in medical staffing were published by Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on health, and Evan Harris, a Liberal Democrat MP and former hospital doctor who is still paying off a student loan.

Mr Hughes said there was a need for a new medical school, providing an extra 150 student places a year. Surveys showed the numbers of doctors were not matching the increased work-

load, and the ratio of juniors to consultants had fallen. "It would be the worst possible move for the Dearing report to be implemented in way that makes medical students fear they will be worse off. The Dearing report is wrong. A contribution to tuition fees would be a disincentive," he said.

Hospitals were hiring doctors from the Commonwealth to meet the doctor shortage. Less than half of the senior house officers in East Anglia this year were British.



Frank Dobson: To meet Blunkett over exemptions

Ashdown enters fray over HK plot claims

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Paddy Ashdown last night demanded an inquiry by a Commons select committee into allegations that Britain colluded with China in the hand-over of Hong Kong.

He wrote to Tony Blair, urging him to give government support to an inquiry by the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, but stopped short of seeking an investigation into Tory claims that Chris Patten, the former Hong Kong Governor, was "smeared" by Mr Blair's aides over the affair.

"We are not interested in Tory allegations of news management. It is not our prime concern," said a spokesman for Mr Ashdown.

Mr Patten, holidaying in France, has denied he leaked classified documents about the deal to Jonathan Dimbleby for his book on Mr Patten's term of

office as governor. Mr Patten said that if the allegations of a smear campaign against him were true, the Prime Minister's aides would have been acting like "witch-doctors" and not spin-doctors.

The allegations were made by Sir Brian Mawhinney, the Tory spokesman on home affairs.

He accused Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, and Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, of "pointing the finger" at Mr Patten's reputation by briefing the press about an inquiry being mounted by MI6.

Mr Ashdown said he did not believe Mr Patten would have provided secret documents.

He also did not think it was "even conceivable" that the story had been a blatant Government news-management attempt, and pointed the finger instead at Mr Patten's enemies in or near the Foreign Office.

"I'm troubled at the way this came out. I think it's extremely unlikely that the Government has had a hand in this in terms of news manipulation."

"I think it's far more likely that it's come from some source hostile to Chris Patten and all that he has done in Hong Kong, either in or close to the Foreign Office," Mr Ashdown said on BBC Radio.

But he said that was the "small change" of the issue: "The big issue is to what extent there may or may not have been a conspiracy, written or unwritten, which did not serve either the best interests of the people of Hong Kong or the best traditions of the British foreign service."

The allegations in Mr Dimbleby's book went "to the heart of the integrity of the British administration and the extent to which it served the best interests of the people of Hong Kong at that time."

Rail firm offers bonus to cancel holidays

Randeep Ramesh

South West Trains, the troubled privatised rail company, is offering drivers £1,000 bonuses if they cancel their holidays and work over the summer in order to keep hundreds of services running.

The company, which was forced to cut hundreds of trains earlier this year, said that it had inherited a "high occurrence of annual leave over the period" and drivers were returning to work.

SWT, which runs services from London's Waterloo station to Berkshire, Surrey and Hampshire, was the first British Rail train company to be sold to the private sector.

Its new owners, bus giant Stagecoach, did little to endear themselves to the paying public however when management sacked too many drivers, causing services to be cut without warning.

The franchising director, who oversees passenger services, also threatened to remove Stagecoach's licence.

The company is determined to head off another shortage this summer – and implemented a bonus scheme.

Train crews are being offered cash bonuses of £250 a day and up to £1,500 to give up a week's holiday and work instead. The scheme has been called into question by the Health and Safety Executive.

The HSE warned that it could take action against SWT if any breaches of safety law were found in the scheme. Drivers can work 13 consecutive days in any two-week period under the safety rules.

But SWT said nothing it was proposing was against the law and it also dismissed claims by a rail pressure group that what it was doing was wrong.

The HSE said it had asked SWT for details of its plan and added that, under 1994 regulations, staff doing critical safety work could only operate for a limited number of hours.

"If we find any breaches of safety laws, legal action could be taken," said the HSE.

SWT said: "We are not breaching any regulations. Nobody will be allowed to work any longer than is permitted."

A spokeswoman added: "We restructured drivers' arrangements earlier this year, but are honouring holidays in the old roster system."

"We have taken a short-term measure to offer a bonus scheme to cover this holiday abnormality over the next few weeks."

But Keith Bill, the national secretary of pressure group Save Our Railways, said: "This is another management foul-up and taxpayers are having to fork out."

"The scramble for increased profits has led to this problem, which is down to a huge management mistake."

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Couriers strike at heart of America

David Osborne
New York

The White House says it is not sufficiently serious to cause it to intervene, but a strike that is crippling the United Parcel Service (UPS) in the United States is a giant spanner thrown in the works of an otherwise booming society.

The nationwide stoppage by 185,000 members of the Teamsters Union that began on Monday has virtually shut down UPS operations in the US and is already hobbling the myriad industries and companies across the country that depend on its sprawling network for the distribution of their products.

It also threatens disappointment to millions of Americans who increasingly do their shopping by catalogue and who in the 1990s have come to expect a standard of overnight service that has grown out of a more generalised "we'll-get-it-to-you-by-yesterday-madam" consumer-is-king mentality.

Indeed, the brown blur of the lumbering UPS vans and their drivers in all-brown jackets, shorts and socks has become as much a feature of the American landscape as takeaways and the yellow school bus. With no new talks scheduled, there seemed little chance yesterday of it returning any time soon.

"This strike is a symbolic war into the fabric of the American flag," remarked Carol Moog, president of Creative Focus, a market research company. "UPS is a contemporary Pony Express."

It is particularly jarring at a time when in almost every other respect, America is remarkably at peace with itself. Consumer confidence is at a record high as what economists have dubbed the "Goldilocks scenario" is delivering rock-bottom unemployment with

barely a whisper of inflation. Under US law, the President can order a return to work in a dispute if the national good is deemed to be in jeopardy. In February, Mr Clinton sent American Airlines pilots back to work when they walked out, but yesterday the White House said that the standard had not been met in the UPS case.

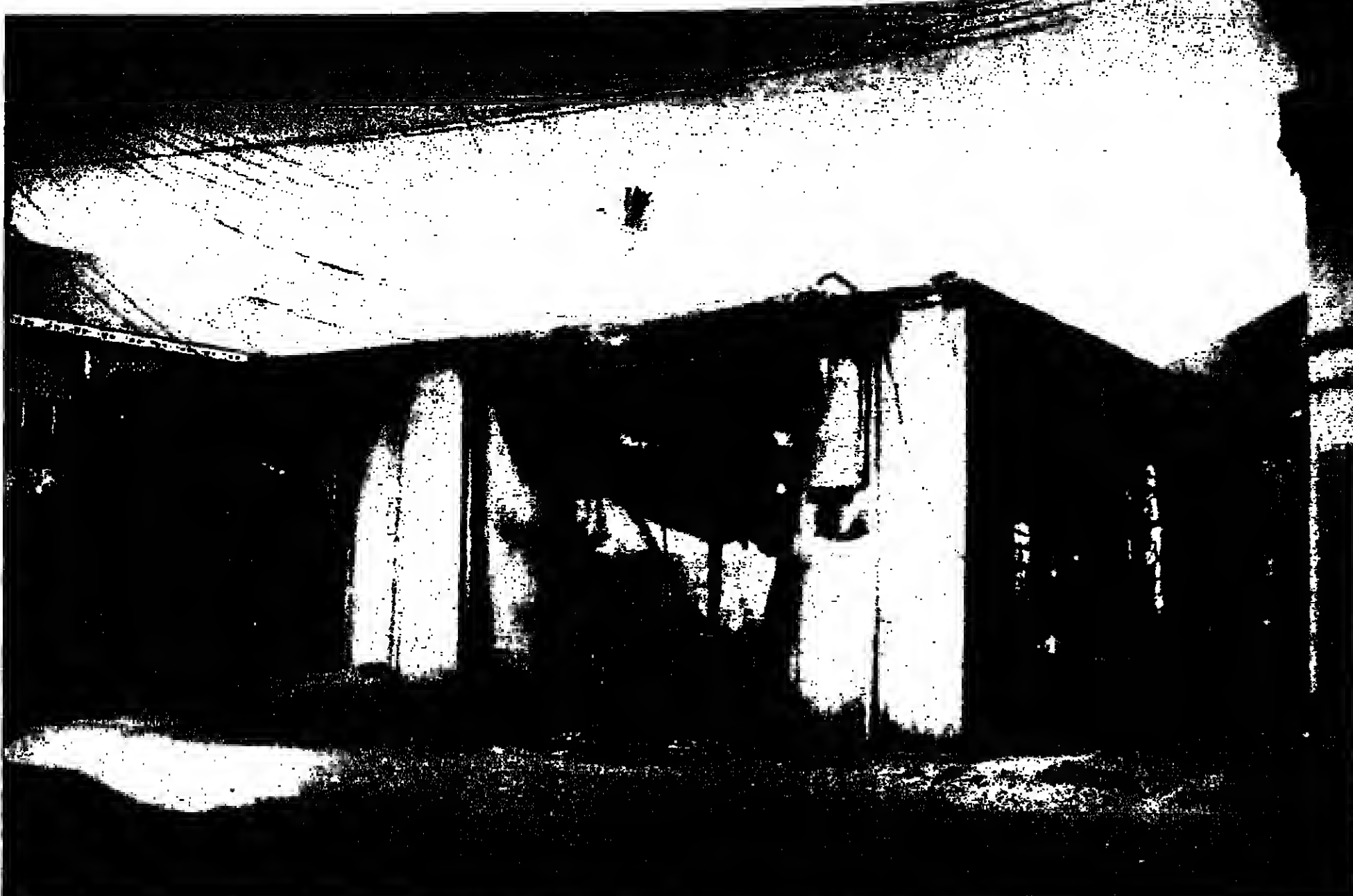
There may be a change of heart, however, if the stoppage drags on. UPS is the world's largest courier company. In the US, it is twice the size of the glitzy Federal Express and handles some 12 million packages a day. So far, the strike has not spread to its foreign operations in Europe or elsewhere.

There are also extraordinarily high stakes involved in the dispute which is involving more workers than any labour dispute in the US this decade. For one, it represents a brave gamble by the once-mighty Teamsters Union to reassert its muscle after a decade of declining clout.

More important, however, is the increasing reliance of UPS on part-time workers, who on average are paid only \$8.50 an hour by the company compared with \$19 for full-time employees.

This resonates far and wide here, where the single most convincing downside to the Goldilocks economy is the emergence of so-called "throw-away" or burger-flipping jobs that offer little remuneration and no security. With flexibility and low-cost efficiency as the watchwords espoused by employers, some 18 per cent of workers in the US are on part-time deals.

This trend could be put in reverse, however, if the Teamsters prevail in the strike which might embolden unions at other companies to challenge the fairness of refusing new employees full-time contracts.



Abandoned city: Flames flickering on the shell of a bank building set alight by the showers of burning rocks and ashes falling on Plymouth

Photograph: Kevin West/AP

Montserrat's deserted capital is engulfed by volcano's fire

Phil Davison
Antigua
Louise Jury
London

Plymouth, historic capital of the British colony of Montserrat, appeared headed for total destruction yesterday after a second day of volcanic eruption.

The town that once housed 5,000 people - evacuated to the hills, other islands or Britain two years ago - has been showered with red-hot debris from the towering Soufriere volcano.

The local government offices, the police headquarters and the town's central petrol station have all been set on fire.

"Plymouth is pretty much all gone," said a helicopter pilot, Jim McMahon, after surveying the deserted capital yesterday morning. "Most of the town has now been affected one way or the other."

Scientists met yesterday to discuss the latest eruptions and decide whether the rest of the island - increasingly showered with debris since Sunday - was

safe for the 5,000 or so islanders who remain, many of them in shelters.

"It's taken the heart out of Plymouth, if you will," said Phil Ellis, a spokesman for the British governor's office. "It's peppered the area with pebbles about an inch thick. The pyroclastic flow is now running easily through Plymouth since the path has been cleared by the initial flow. Many buildings have been razed. It's the worst activity since last September. We're encouraging everyone to move to higher ground."

In Britain, a benefit concert for Montserrat to be held at the Royal Albert Hall in central London next month has stars such as Eric Clapton, Elton John, Mark Knopfler, Paul McCartney and Sting lined up to perform.

All 4,500 tickets were sold within 90 minutes of the box office opening last Friday. Callers were each limited to four tickets for the 15 September show at prices ranging from £25 to £100. It is hoped at least £500,000 will be raised for the relief effort and to rebuild the island. All the musicians are giving their services for free.

The concert was the brainchild of Sir George Martin, the former Beatles producer who has a home on the island. His recording studio, where all the concert's stars have recorded, was destroyed by the first volcanic eruptions in 1995.

Announcing the relief effort for the people of the island, Sir George said: "Their warmth and kindness throughout the 10 years that Air Studios operated in Montserrat was overwhelming. For two years I have

by their ready response to help and perform."

The artists will play solo, in duets and all together on stage for a grand finale.

Geoff Baker, spokesman for Sir Paul McCartney, said the former Beatle was one of the first to use George Martin's studios, producing both *Tug of Love* there and *Edony and Ivory*, his duet with Stevie Wonder.

"George is obviously a very old and dear friend from way back and this concert is the sort of thing Paul would do anyway. He loved the people when he was there. Thousands of them have been made homeless. It's like a paradise lost," Mr Baker said.

Sir George bought a plot of land and adopted the island as a second home in 1979. During the Eighties, a string of top bands played in the studio before relaxing by the pool or strolling to the beach. Dire Straits made the album *Brothers in Arms* and the Police recorded *Synchronicity*. The Rolling Stones rubbed shoulders with Duran Duran, Status Quo with Roger Daltrey of The Who.



Volunteers: Sting (above) and Elton John (below) have promised to play at the Montserrat concert



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Europe's fat cats facing a leaner winter

Katherine Butler
Brussels

The August exodus from the EU nerve-centre is under way, but highly paid Eurocrats face a leaner than usual winter, now that their perks are set to come under the axe.

The belt-tightening drive to monetary union is taking its toll in most member-states but the austerity drive is beginning to bite in Brussels too. A yearly parcel of tax-free drink and a supermarket where only European officials can shop will be the first to go as Commission bosses move to disarm critics of the EU's executive.

The Germans, who claim to pay most of the EU's bills, are impatient for reform. In negotiations on the Amsterdam treaty this year Bonn demanded legal changes to wrest control over EU officials' pay from the Commission. Werner Hoyer, minister for European affairs, said the image of the "Euro fat-cat" was partly to blame for public hostility to a single European currency in Germany. Germany's bid failed and the treaty concluded in June contains nothing which undermines the Commission's right to go on setting its own lavish pay-scales.

Conscious of the poor image suffered by the Brussels bureaucracy, Erkki Liikanen, the commissioner in charge of personnel, is preparing for a clampdown. He plans to target the tax-free drinks and "Econo-

mat" supermarket hidden in a basement under Commission offices. He is also understood to have in his sights Eurocrats who live in their home countries but enjoy Brussels-style salaries and a special light tax regime.

Such cases are common in Belgium and Luxembourg, which house the main EU institutions and where many staff are recruited but where local salaries can be abysmal and tax is punitive. In Brussels the greatly resented *fonctionnaires* are blamed for driving up rents and creating urban blight in the inner city with a sprawl of ugly office buildings.

Staff unions are gearing up to do battle against the perk attack, even though many privately say they do not even bother to take advantage. "What we have to hold," said a union member, "is the principle, not the value. If we let them take this away, where will it end?"

At the top of the tree, EU officials can earn £120,000 a year in basic salary. Allowances are generous, while few officials pay more than 25 per cent income tax. Living abroad entitles all EU staff to an allowance worth 16 per cent of the basic salary payable until retirement.

A head-of-family allowance is worth another 5 per cent of salary and the dependant-child and schooling allowances bring in a further £170 a month per child right up to university graduation. Free education for offspring is provided in the special European Schools.

French say non to le business speak Anglais

John Lichfield
Paris

Anglophones try to retain their *joie de vivre* even though their life is in a cul de sac. Why should French businessmen not practise le hard-selling and le co-marketing of their produits de standing in le prime-time?

The French Ministry of Culture takes the view, reasonably enough, that linguistic immigration, like any other kind, is tolerable in moderation. When it becomes an uncontrolled flood, it is time to grow worried (or even hit le panic-button). Despite all the efforts of the Académie Française to maintain the beauty and purity of the language, French business-speak is drowning in Anglicisms. The Ministry of Culture, in its summer newsletter, asks subscribers to join in a competition to find the best French substitutes for words and phrases such as le just-in-time, le copy-strategy, le sleeping-partner, le fresh-money and even le deal.

The competition, devised by the Association to Promote Business French, has already been attempted by 32,000, mainly young, French speakers around the world. The Culture Ministry has now thrown the contest open to all readers of its newsletter in the hope that they will spend part of their summer holidays racking their brains for French synonyms for le bus-catalogue or le personal-communicator.

There is no prize for success;

only the satisfaction of helping to defend the language of Voltaire from constant erosion by the language of Shakespeare (or rather the language of le Harvard Business School).

The main part of the competition is a long business text in which readers are invited to substitute French for *Anglais*. The text begins: "C'est à la fin du briefing, en sirotant [sipping] un light-drink au bar, que Bertrand annonça le scoop: nous allons pouvoir bientôt jouer les discounters et mettre sur le marché des milliers de mountain-bikes avec un look de standing qui allait devenir un must... sans recourir au dumping ou au hard-selling."

It continues: "Le buzzer du personal-communicator de Bertrand se fit entendre... Cet appareil transmettait des fax et même des e-mails et des données sur le Net. Un message s'était inscrit sur le display."

French substitutes suggested by previous competitions include le briefing, le briefing, message déconstruit, le e-mail, le télé-copie, le fax, le remède agressif, le hard-selling, and le remède à la pelle. The effort is creditable enough. Many of the buzz-words are annoying enough in English, without being accepted into French. Perhaps more worryingly for France, the linguistic invasion reflects a stubborn fact: most of these business concepts and inventions have English names because they were invented in the Anglo-Saxon (mostly American) world.

Moscow supply

Charles Arthur
Helen Womack

Israel's end of I

سكنا من الاربعاء

Moscow, we have another problem. Oxygen supply fails as Mir rescue mission launched

Charles Arthur and Helen Womack on the troubled space station's latest crisis

Even on its successful days, the Russian space programme has mixed news. There were no problems with the blast-off at 4.35pm BST of Soyuz rocket TM26, from Baikonur in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, carrying a two-man crew to relieve two of the exhausted trio aloft in the Mir space station. They are due to arrive on Thursday.

However, hours before the launch, mission control announced that the oxygen generators on board the ageing space station had failed - although they emphasised that there was no danger of the three men aboard dying of suffocation.

The two men who were last night en route to Mir, Commander Anatoly Solovyov, 49, and flight engineer Pavel Vinogradov, 43, will have to carry out repairs which are crucial to the entire future of the Russian space programme. Starting on 20 August, one of them will have to undertake a difficult spacewalk inside the cramped, but de-pressurised Spektr module, holed on 25 June by a miscalculation during docking practice with an unmanned supply ship. The intention is to reconnect power cables cut on 25 June when the module was sealed off, and find and patch the leak.

In external spacewalks, the bulky space-suit is unencumbered by peripheral clutter. By contrast, this will be one of the most complex ever undertaken: even the main part of Mir is only four metres in diameter, and the hole in Spektr is reckoned to lie towards the far end of the module. If floating debris or a wall projection punctures the space-suit, the cosmonaut inside will die.

The repairs are expected to require six spacewalks, both internal and external.

The importance to Moscow of this mission was underlined by the presence at the launch of government ministers. Baikonur (which Russia is now obliged to rent from its satellite republic) has rarely been the focus of so much official attention since Yuri Gagarin blasted off from there in 1961 to become the first man in space.

There have been some misgivings that financial problems and the repeated technical troubles aboard Mir - which has now racked up a worrying 1,500 malfunctions in its 65,000 45-minute orbits - could mean that these will be the last Russian men in space. Hence the importance of making these repairs to the 11-year-old station - even though Russian authorities have acknowledged that its core will have to be replaced sometime in the next two years.

Since the accident in June, the present crew, Vasily Tsibilyev, Alexander Lazutkin and British-born Michael Foale, have had to manage with reduced power supplies. Those problems multiplied when the Elektron oxygen generation system broke down again, as it has been prone to do of late.

It sounded dramatic but officials at Mission Control explained there was no cause for alarm as Mir itself was large enough for the existing supply of oxygen to last several days. After that, the astronauts had access to canisters of oxygen which could keep them breathing for a further two months. But the generator should be fixed long before canisters became necessary, they said. The arriving crew will also have canisters available.

The changeover of crew will be a difficult space ballet. First, a Progress supply ship must be undocked from the main capsule, while Tsibilyev and Lazutkin get into



Mir-bound: Cosmonauts Solovyov (below) and Vinogradov (above) at Baikonur yesterday Photograph: AP

the Soyuz TM25 lifeboat. Then the arriving crew on TM26 will dock where the Progress was. The new crew will take over from the old one. Once the two departing Russians embark for Earth in the TM25, the TM26 will be brought around to the docking spot they have vacated. Then the work can begin.

Mission Control decided some weeks ago that the present crew was too exhausted by the constant problems - failing oxygen generators, lack of sleep, variations in temperature caused by failing power generators - to carry out the delicate work. One American astronaut has described doing repairs while wearing a spacesuit as "like doing surgery while wearing boxing gloves".

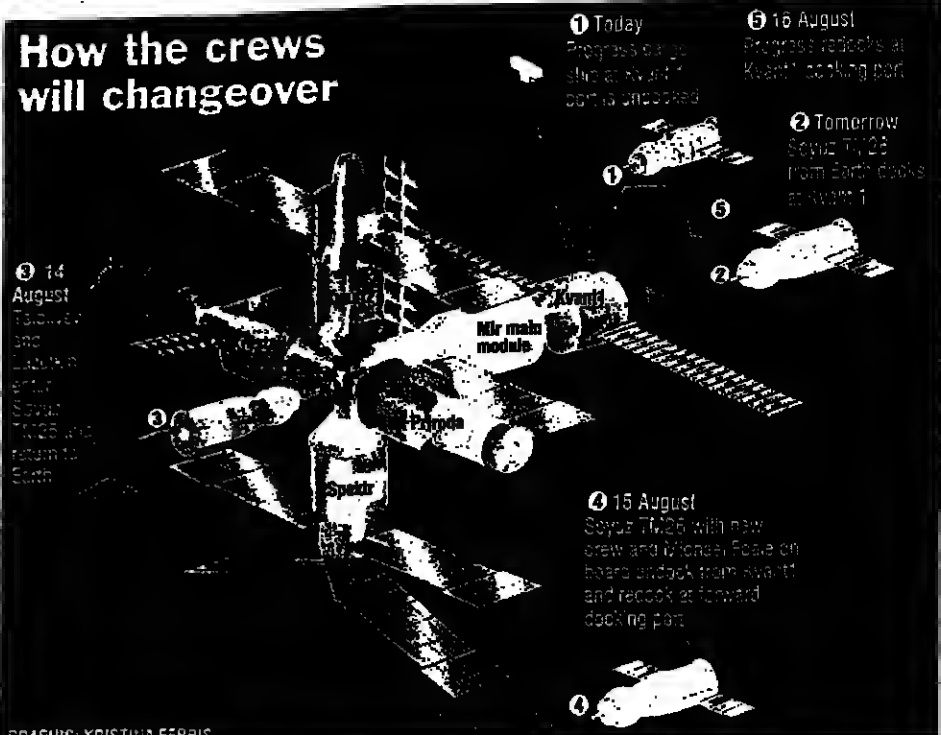
On one previous occasion, Michael Foale had to abandon a spacewalk when he found he was losing sensation in his fingers, which were freezing. During these space-

walks, he will wait in the TM26 in case an evacuation becomes necessary. Foale's American replacement, David Wolf, is not due to arrive by Atlantis Shuttle until the end of September.

Space professionals are becoming used to crises on Mir, which to the layman sound horrific. On one occasion, the waste disposal system failed, turning the station into an orbiting lavatory, and fire has also broken out on Mir which, when it was launched 11 years ago, was supposed to have a service life of only five years.

Post-Communist Russia, which has not been able to pay its pensioners and state sector workers on time, is desperately short of funds for its once prestigious space programme, which many people now see as a luxury. The outcome of the repair mission will determine whether Moscow's hope of using Mir for two more years is realistic.

How the crews will changeover



Calendar of disaster

February - A fire breaks out on board.

15 May - British born astronaut Michael Foale blasts off on Earth on the Atlantis shuttle to undertake vital repairs on Mir.

25 June - Mir's airless Spektr module is damaged during a practice docking with the cargo ship. The ensuing collision results in a disconnected cable which ruptures the space module.

Mir is forced to run on reduced power and some areas of the ship are shut down to conserve energy.

28 June - Mir drifts out of control for hours after a computer problem disables the steering.

It is believed that a power surge or other electrical problem knocked out a computer as the crew slept.



British-born Michael Foale, due to be replaced on Mir

entrusted repairs to the existing crew but decided a new team should undertake the work after the commander, Vasily Tsibilyev developed heart troubles.

5 August - Anatoly Solovyov and flight engineer Pavel Vinogradov blast off in a Soyuz-U booster rocket to relieve Mir's beleaguered crew, who are facing new problems as their oxygen generators have broken down. The crew must now manage on their existing oxygen supplies and oxygen canisters.

Russian space officials play down the seriousness of the problem and stress that there is no immediate danger. It is only now revealed that the oxygen generators have been periodically breaking down throughout the past week.

Israel's deadly raid spells end of Lebanon ceasefire

Robert Fisk Beirut

The Israeli military spokesman reported "accurate hits" during yesterday's midday air raid on the lower Bekaa valley of Lebanon. Which was odd, because the casualties were all civilians: two farmers, aged 70 and 50, killed outright by one of two missiles fired by the Israeli jets, another farmer of 70 seriously wounded, two children and a fourth civilian hurt. Not a single Hezbollah guerrilla was reported to have been injured in the raid around the tiny village of Rahala. So how much longer can the south Lebanon ceasefire - if it can still be dignified with such a name - hold?

"We're waiting for the Katyushas to go over the border," a Lebanese army officer commented grimly in the aftermath of the raid, assuming that the Hezbollah would fire across the frontier into Israel instead of waiting for another meeting of the powerless five-power truce monitoring committee. Only a few hours earlier, the pro-Iranian guerrilla army had promised "a sharp and tough response that will make the enemy suffer" following Monday's Israeli helicopter landing which left five guerrillas dead at Kfour in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon is in an area of the Bekaa in which the Hezbollah operate; it is from around the nearby town of Rashaya that they frequently launch raids




Face of anger: Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, speaking at a press conference yesterday, accuses Israel of wrecking the peace process in the wake of last week's Jerusalem suicide bombs Photograph: Ali Jarekji

against Israel's occupation zone in southern Lebanon and its 1,500 occupation troops. But yesterday's Israeli raid was, in both political and military terms, a disaster. The two dead farmers, who were picking sesame seeds when they were

shot, he said, were named as Mohamed Hazzim and Ali Akl, both Shiite Muslims. It now transpires that in Monday's raid on the Hizbollah, one of the five guerrillas who were blown up by bombs left by the Israelis was Sheikh Thais-

sir Badran, the chief of Hizbollah's operations in the Nabatea area of southern Lebanon. He died along with Hussein Qasir, one of his senior officers. Sheikh Badran was believed by the Israelis to have been responsible for an attack that killed nine Israeli occupation soldiers inside southern Lebanon two years ago; local intelligence sources say that the subsequent Israeli bombing of a house near Nabatea - in which 14 civilians, most of them women and children, were slaughtered, was intended to strike Badran's home more than a mile away. The Israelis later claimed that the death of the 14 civilians was due to a "technical error".

At an angry funeral service for the dead Hizbollah men yesterday, Sheikh Naim Qasir, one of the leading members of the organisation's Beirut politburo, warned that the group would attack the Israeli army with suicide bombers. Although all five who died in Kfour were guerrillas, three civilians were also wounded - which constitutes a breach of the ceasefire rules. Yesterday's Israeli raid, which killed only civilians, broke almost every rule laid down by the truce committee. Faced with a possible violent confrontation with the Palestinians on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, the Israelis are therefore coming close to a second-front full-scale battle with the Hizbollah in southern Lebanon.



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international



Mandela: One of the most respected men in the world

Mandela effect could help to break the East Timor logjam

Richard Lloyd Parry

Of all the world's statesmen, Nelson Mandela and President Suharto are the two whom one would least expect to have anything constructive to say to one another.

Since his transformation from political prisoner to leader of South Africa, the former has become one of the most respected men in the world, a symbol of the triumph of justice over oppression. President Suharto of Indonesia, by contrast, is a polar opposite: a stern autocrat and liberal bogeyman with a grim record of political oppression. But, against all expectations, the two have become correspondents. And hopes are

rising that their unexpected entente could provide a solution to one of the most stubborn small wars in the world.

The conflict in question is that of East Timor, the former Portuguese colony invaded by Indonesia in 1976. Ever since its act of annexation the following year, Jakarta has refused to brook any compromise, and brutally crushed the dwindling East Timorese resistance.

United Nations-supervised talks between Indonesia and Portugal, which is still recognised in the UN as the administering power, have been deadlocked for years. But hesitantly - and despite a mortifying hiccup this week - things may at last be moving, thanks

to the discreet personal intervention of the South African president.

With piquant symbolism, Mr Mandela is concentrating his diplomatic efforts on the fate of a celebrated political prisoner - Xanana Gusmao, the leader of the East Timorese resistance, who is serving a 20-year prison sentence. Last month, Mr Mandela made an official visit to Indonesia.

A week after his departure, to general astonishment, it emerged that he had requested and been allowed a meeting with Mr Gusmao, inside the grounds of President Suharto's palace.

"We can never normalise the situation until all the leaders, in-

cluding Gusmao, are free," Mr Mandela said last week, after meeting in Pretoria with the Portuguese President, Jorge Sampaio.

He formally requested Mr Gusmao's release in a private letter to President Suharto which this week became the focus of a profound diplomatic embarrassment.

Instead of being delivered directly to Mr Suharto, it appears to have been delivered to the Portuguese embassy in Pretoria, which leaked it to journalists in Lisbon.

For this, the Portuguese ambassador has been expelled, though the bungles does not appear to have done lasting damage to the nascent negotiations.

Despite their contrasting backgrounds, Mr Mandela and President Suharto are said to have a warm personal relationship, based on their shared experience of the apartheid period.

Both countries are former Dutch colonies, and leading members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the UN of the developing world.

But it is a measure of Mr Mandela's global standing that he is able to broach with President Suharto what is almost a taboo subject in Indonesian political circles.

The timing of the initiative also provides reasons for expectation. The stalled UN talks

resumed this week, and there are rumours, so far denied, that the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, will soon travel to Pretoria. On 17 August Indonesia celebrates Independence Day, a traditional time for the release of prisoners.

"If Bill Clinton had suggested this, he would probably have got a stiff response," said a diplomat in Jakarta.

"But next to Mother Teresa, it's hard for them to know what to do with Mandela. He's got such broad appeal, particularly in the Third World."

"It's pressure on the Indonesians but it also gives them a kind of cover to solve this problem without losing so much face."



Suharto: Bogeyman of the liberals, with a grim record

The cabaret doors are open once more in Immoral Berlin, birthplace of sexual freedom



Imre Karacs reports on 100 years of the Gay Metropolis

The flattened scrubland in the arch of the River Spree, where Helmut Kohl hopes one day to indulge in his passion for breeding rabbits, is balled ground. There is nothing here now, except the bulldozers leveling the earth so work can soon begin on the new chancellery.

But some time ago, before the machines, the barbed wire and the bunkers, there stood a very special building on this plot. It was Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Research, a shrine dedicated to studying the love which only in Berlin dared speak its name.

Nothing is left now of the man and the place, except the distant echoes of the bedonistic days of the Roaring Twenties and the ashes of retribution exacted by another bunch of leather-clad men a decade later. That Berlin in its golden age was more than a just string of wild cabaret spots, and that it drank its fill of freedom long before the rest of the world discovered the El Dorado night club, is almost forgotten. Yet, for a brief interval between despotism and annihilation, this was the capital of enlightenment; the place where liberation of every kind began. Now the city's gay community, eclipsed in the meantime by the likes of San Francisco, wants to put the record straight.

An exhibition entitled "Goodbye to Berlin? - 100 Years of Gay Liberation", has been running for two months at the Academy of Arts, a worn Sixties concrete pile a short walk from the pioneering institute. It is in Hirschfeld's apartment that the century of emancipation began in May 1897, when the doctor and three of his friends set up the first organisation in the world openly committed to fighting sexual intolerance.

The "Scientific-Humanitarian Com-

mittee" was their outraged response to the imprisonment, two years previously, of Oscar Wilde. The first months of the movement were bedevilled by internal ideological strife as the founders sought to spread their influence worldwide. A certain Sigmund Freud from Vienna was the most prominent early defector. He had insisted that homosexuality, while not a crime, was a disease - a diagnosis not acceptable to the homosexual Hirschfeld. Nevertheless, despite its troubled start, the committee had enough clout by 1899 to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Berlin police, persuading them to stop raiding cafés frequented by gays.

This was an era of double standards.

'This was where liberation of every kind began'

The authorities often turned a blind eye to homosexuality because many powerful men in Prussia, including a top general and a close confidant of the kaiser, were gay. But there were frequent scandals and those exposed faced a life in ruin. Not surprisingly, it was in the Berlin of this period that "outing" was invented. Many hypocrites were thus expelled from the closet, but the weapon sometimes proved double-edged. In 1907 an anarchist gay publisher named Adolf Brand aimed a little too high, "outing" the reactionary Reichschancellor Prince von Bülow. He sued for defamation and Brand ended up in jail. In all this time, the committee published books, collected signatures, and campaigned for the repeal of the

notorious Paragraph 175 proscribing homosexuality. They were never to succeed, but love between men eventually became *de facto* tolerated in the Weimar republic. And so the German capital became the "Gay Metropolis", "Immoral Berlin" - in the words of the title of a 1930 alternative guide - the home of Auden, Isherwood, Spender and other artists drawn to its permissive milieu.

It is no coincidence that when 1933 came, Hirschfeld's institute was singled out for an early ransacking and book-burning visit. The committee was forced into exile and, after Hitler's coup a year later against Ernst Röhm, the gay - leader of the Nazi storm-troopers, a war was declared on "deviants". The police were ordered to draw up lists. Some 50,000 Germans were convicted of homosexuality, many perishing in concentration camps. Those who escaped went on to carry the torch beyond the Third Reich, helping to set up gay self-help organisations in their adopted homes.

These days, when Dr Hirschfeld's institute is gone yet the whole of Berlin seems engaged again in sexual experimentation, it is difficult to conceive why it took nearly three decades after the war to right the wrongs. Homosexual acts between consenting adults were only legalised in the former West Germany in 1973, and a lot later in the East.

United Berlin is now making up for lost time, but finds itself, as in so many other things, overtaken. The slogans and tactics of the movement born by the River Spree have to be reimported from the United States, from "Gay Pride" marches to lobbying techniques developed across the Atlantic. Curiously, "outing" has yet to return. Perhaps Berlin gays learnt their lesson first time round, exactly 90 years ago.

Das Gesicht der Demokratie



Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld

hat selbst so unglaublich viel sex appeal, daß er der geeignete „Wahrer der sexuellen Balance“ der neudeutschen Jugend und Vorkämpfer für Aufhebung des § 175 ist.

Exploration: Main picture, Liza Minnelli and Joel Grey starring in Cabaret, based on Isherwood's stories of Berlin in the early Thirties. Above, Hirschfeld, "fitting" founder of the Institute for Sexual Research

significant shorts

Clinton and Gingrich hail budget-balancing deal

President Bill Clinton signed legislation aimed at balancing the budget and giving \$95bn (\$60bn) in tax cuts. The Republican Speaker, Newt Gingrich, stood with Mr Clinton on a stage set up on the South Lawn to celebrate the legislation. "We come here today, Democrats and Republicans, Congress and president, Americans of goodwill from all points of view and all walks of life, to celebrate a true milestone for our nation," said Mr Clinton, who signed two bills, approved last week by the Republican-controlled Congress, one that aims to balance the budget by 2002 and a companion piece that cuts taxes by \$95bn over five years. AP - Washington

Japan to cut US bases cash

Japan is likely to cut contributions to maintaining US armed forces on its soil from next year, *Asahi* newspaper said. It would be the first reduction since Japan started paying part of the costs of running US military bases in 1978. The Defence Agency has made no formal decision, although it is considering a reduction, the Foreign Ministry said. This year Japan will pay 273.7bn yen (£1.4bn) towards the cost of keeping US troops in Japan. The contribution covers salaries for civilian employees, maintaining facilities and water and electricity. AP - Tokyo

German MPs' patience taxed

MPs interrupted summer holidays for a special debate on Chancellor Helmut Kohl's tax-reform package but only confirmed the deadlock between government and opposition. The Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, accused the opposition Social Democrats of stalling the plan in order to snare votes. The lower house passed the proposal last month but the opposition-dominated upper house rejected it. AP - Bonn

Tudjman starts second term

President Franjo Tudjman, who led Croatia to independence from federal Yugoslavia, was sworn in for a second five-year term in office. "I swear upon my honour that I will carry out my duties to the benefit of all Croatian citizens," he said at a colourful open-air ceremony held in front of top state and church officials and foreign ambassadors in a packed central Zagreb square cordoned by police. Reuters - Zagreb

Clean sweep for litterbugs

Those convicted of littering will soon have to sweep the streets in Malaysia while wearing a T-shirt bearing the words "I am a litterbug." The Housing and Local Government Minister, Ting Chew Peh, said it was hoped the public shaming would deter others. "We have come to a point where we have tried everything from stiff penalties to nationwide education campaigns, but the situation remains the same." AP - Kuala Lumpur

Dentist screws up

A Swede with toothache was taken to hospital for X-rays after a dentist dropped a small screwdriver into his mouth and he swallowed it. The dentist, who has 20 years experience, was fastening the patient's bridge when he dropped a one-inch screwdriver and it disappeared. The patient was taken to hospital, where X-ray examinations showed the tool in his gullet. Later check-ups found it in his stomach. The screwdriver did no harm and came out "the natural way". Reuters - Stockholm

Dolomites tragedy kills seven

Seven climbers fell to their deaths in the Italian Dolomites and another had a fatal plunge in Switzerland, bringing to at least 37 the number killed in the European Alps over the past four weeks. AP - Bolzano

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Dominique Sirop missed out on the big job at Givenchy, but he has developed a loyal following of his own. By Ian Phillips

During last January's haute couture collections, the eyes and cameras of the fashion world were firmly fixed upon the Brits. With their flamboyant debut collection at Dior and Givenchy, John Galiano and Alexander McQueen monopolised the headlines and stirred up media attention across the globe. Yet, at the same time, in a beautiful town mansion near the Moulin Rouge, a little-known French designer was making waves of his own. Forty-year old Dominique Sirop showed a small but exquisitely elegant collection, which had fashion aficionados swiftly reaching for superlatives. "Any conventional fashion-conscious woman would kill for these clothes," wrote the *International Herald Tribune's* Suzy Menkes. "The houses of couture houses now want wacky attention-grabbing shows, rather than client-pleasers. But Sirop's collection was a timely reminder that cut and class are still the high C's of haute couture."

The name Dominique Sirop may mean little to the general public, but he was actually Hubert de Givenchy's hand-picked choice as his successor. He spent 11 years at the great designer's side, but Bernard Arnault, the boss of LVMH (which owns Givenchy label) had other ideas. He refused to even meet with Sirop, claiming that he was not famous enough, and appointed Galiano instead.

Sirop may only have set up his own Couture house in September of last year, but has already been invited to join the prestigious *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*. He is the first designer to receive this honour since Christian Lacroix 10 years ago. More importantly, former Givenchy clients have been defecting to him en masse and Sirop recounts that one has even stopped wearing Givenchy No. 3 perfume because she no longer wants to be associated with the house's name.

In the three weeks following his last collection, he received over 70 orders. Joan Collins asked him to design her outfit for her daughter's wedding. French actress Judith Godrèche wore one of his dresses to the Oscars and top Parisian socialites like Marie-Thérèse Perrin (wife of Cartier president, Alain-Dominique) and Hélène David-Will (wife of Lazard Frères chairman, Michel) have sported his creations to events around town.

His biggest supporter, however, is American couture client, Nan Kempner. She heard about Sirop while holidaying in Gstaad and decided to jet to Paris especially to view the collection. She came away with three outfits and offered to organise a tea party at her Park Avenue apartment so that Sirop could show off his wares to her friends. Those present included Princess Fyral of Jordan and New York socialite Anne Bass. According to Kempner, "they thought that the collection was wonderful. They were so pleased to meet somebody new and talented."

Kempner herself is literally eulogistic about his clothes. "I am just enamoured with them," she enthuses. "It's beautiful workmanship and full of ideas. His colours are good and he has a great sense of fashion." She is also pretty crazy about the town mansion in which he lives and works ("It's as attractive as anything I've ever seen"), as well as Sirop himself. "He's divine. He's adorable," she gushes. "I just find him devastatingly attractive."

In the flesh, the dark-haired Sirop is actually much better-looking than in photos. He dresses in elegant slim-fitting jackets, wears his shirt unbuttoned to beneath the chest and has a certain French suave-



The house that Dominique built

ness. He is, however, at first rather defensive (he claims that as a Capricorn, he is very secretive). Yet once he opens up he is witty, garrulous and very accommodating. He gives the photographer and I a run of the house for a whole day and is equally indulgent with his cat, Moon. During the interview, she climbs onto his desk and starts to eat a bunch of flowers. Unpunished, she then moves on to have a nibble at a pair of gloves.

The house he shares with Moon is magnificent. Situated at the end of a leafy passage near Pigalle, it was built at the end of the last century and was inhabited by leg-

said to me, "you must buy it because it corresponds to your childhood dream."

The restoration work lasted over two years and Sirop decided to turn the ground floor into his office and atelier, and his first floor into his living quarters. At the top of the stairs is the former theatre, whose ceiling has been painted with a *trompe l'oeil* sky. Next door is Sirop's bedroom, with a small kitchen and bathroom on either side of the door. Almost every piece of furniture is a gem. Although there is a mixture of styles, Sirop expresses a preference for pieces from the Thirties. He has a beautiful art-deco bed and a Thirties inlaid

in Normandy, the black and gold chairs from the couture salon at Paquin and his paintings from the Montreuil flea market in the Parisian suburbs. "I would buy them at 6 am on my way home from night clubbing," he laughs. A number of sea shells are also scattered around the apartment. He has been collecting them since he was a little boy.

Sirop's interest in fashion also dates back to early childhood. By the age of seven, he knew that he wanted to be "either a fashion designer, magician or Sun King" (an early trip to Versailles apparently made a profound impression on him). His mother had been a model for a Paquin and it was through a contract of hers that he got his first job at Yves Saint Laurent in the early Seventies. He stayed there for five years, rose up to the position of *première main qualifiée*, but strangely never came into touch with Saint Laurent himself.

"One day, I asked to meet him to show him my work," remembers Sirop, "but my request was turned down with the words that 'M. Saint Laurent does not see people who are already part of the house.' That lunchtime, he went for a stroll along Avenue George V, stopped in front of the windows of the Givenchy boutique and said to himself 'After the originality of Saint Laurent, why not try the rigour of Givenchy?'" He whipped up three sketches that night and by 8.10 am the next day, had been hired. He stayed until 1989, eventually becoming director of Givenchy prêt-à-porter and haute couture salons.

While Sirop's style is very much his own, he does really admit Hubert de Givenchy's influence on his designs. "He made me understand that true elegance is a case of getting rid of all excess and refining the silhouette so that only the basic essentials are left", he says. Judging from his debut collection, Sirop has learnt the lesson well. Indeed, his clothes are the epitome of modern-day style and refinement. With their simple lines and perfect cut, they flatter the female body and are wonderfully sexy.

As far as haute couture goes, they are also surprisingly cheap. He keeps fittings to a minimum and suits go for as little as 20,000 francs (£2,000) and evening dresses for no more than Fr35,000 (£3,500). Indeed, Sirop sees more affordable outfits as the future of haute couture. "We are now at a turning point", he asserts. "The big ballgown, which takes 3,000 hours to make and which has 4,000 pearls on it, is no longer in touch with reality. The future of couture is not to simply make people dream. My clients wear the clothes I make



Left: Sirop's desk at his Pigalle home and studio. The designer still works under the watchful eye of a framed portrait of Hubert de Givenchy.

Right: fitting an evening dress



Photographs: Lisa Vancro

endary French actor and founder of Theatre-Libre, Antoine, who transformed one room of the house into a small theatre. It later became a lingerie workshop and ended up as a squat in which local musicians would come and practice.

When Sirop first saw it, the house was in quite a catastrophic state. "Everything was damaged, messed up and cracked," he says. "Absolutely everything had to be renovated." Nevertheless, he found the house quite poetic and magical and decided to buy it largely because of the fact that there was a theatre. "At age seven, I dreamt that I lived in a theatre and that I presented my first collection there," he says. "When I spoke to my mother about this place, she

desk, on which he displays a framed sepia photograph of Hubert de Givenchy. Propped against a wall in the theatre is a large, black and white, dedicated photo of Audrey Hepburn, for whom he used to make accessories at Givenchy.

A lacquered Chinese cabinet and oriental Fortuny lamps add a touch of Eastern flavour, while other pieces are very typically French. The burnt orange velvet Directoire sofa in the theatre was bought at auction while he was helping to organise a sale of haute couture outfits. In one room, he announced the next dress and then quickly rushed off to the adjoining room to bid for the sofa. A huge 18th-century mirror was picked up from a chateau

Shopping with Sirop



Made to measure: Sirop's designs for day and evening for Upper East Side ladies and Parisian grandes dames who lunch, a snip at £2,000 a suit. Photographs: Chris Moore

Hats off to the Stetson

From cowboy to supermodel, the 10-gallon hat has made the leap from High Noon to high fashion, says Melissa Mostyn

Naomi Campbell modelled one for *Elle*. Georgina Grenville swears by hers. James Dean lounged sedily in his for *Giant*. Beck makes an ironic point of being a musical cowboy with his. And waving one was Susan Sarandon as one half of the *Thelma and Louise* duo, having demolished a petroleum truck with a single gunshot...

As his boots struck 1860s Texan soil for the first time, agitating its hot dust as they did so, little did John Stetson know that the hat he invented would achieve iconic status. Like many New Jersey residents, his reasons for venturing west was primarily health-related. The fact that he was also a hat manufacturer was incidental.

Early Texan cowboys driving long-horn cattle north found Mexican sombreroes weighty, and the alternative - cheap American-made hats with floppy brims made from wool that would not stiffen - was undignified and uncomfortable. The demand for a better-

quality "hair case" (Texas-speak for hat) inspired Stetson to set up a factory in Philadelphia to manufacture what he called the 10-gallon hat (named for its size and durability).

Stetson's reputation shot throughout the States faster than a fusillade of bullets, and made him a multi-millionaire. Regional and individual tastes spawned some distinctive variations, particularly in the shape of the Stetson's crease. You could get a Montana (very peaky), a centrefire (exactly in the middle), or a cattleman (shallow and wide as a plain). Brims could be rodeo, ranch, snap, or Aussie-style.

Today, far more "pilgrims" (non-cowboys) wear Stetsons than real cowhands. Apart from James Dean, the Stetson's most obvious association is with the Dallas posse, the most enthusiastic fan



being JR Ewing as the owner of the biggest John B west of the Red River. Americans who favour Stetsons are expressing a fondness for a time when a languid journey on horseback, a slurp of "neck oil" (whiskey), a fiddle of the trigger and a visit to the hookshop epitomised the simple life.

Back in the UK, as a summer alternative to the usual canvas sun-hat, you can't beat the 10-gallon for hip value. Coupled with a string bikini and a stomach smoother than a brown saddle, it adds sex appeal while offering sun protection to your head, neck and shoulders.

Authentic cowboy hats can be had from The Hat Shop (0171-8366718) in felt for around £17.

and in straw for only £2.95. RM Williams do them Aussie-style (0171-629 6222). If you find the traditional felt too sweaty - the originals were made from rabbit or beaver felt - Rachel Trevor-Morgan (0171-839 8927) offers a breezier made-to-order version in straw for £190.

Before you go galloping off to the beach with your Stetson, remember this: like Ronald Reagan, JR Ewing et al, you are contributing to a legacy. Thanks to the Stetson's worldwide reputation, real cowhands are rejecting theirs by the 10-gallon. Recently, a tourist asked a cowboy in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, why he wore a baseball cap. Presumably thinking of *Thelma and Louise*, he drawled: "Don't wanna look like a truck driver."

Two tone Italian straw stetson, £190, by Rachel Trevor-Morgan, available from 18 Crown Passage, King Street, London SW1; ring first on 0171-839 8927. Photograph: Mark J Curtis

سكنا من الاله

You can't afford to pay peanuts, Mr Blunkett

Britain is not obsessed by money. But material rewards are important enough in our society for the general level of teachers' pay, the higher the quality of entrants to this vital profession. The better the teachers, the better (economically, socially, culturally) Britain will be. Of course money guarantees nothing. A lot of lawyers and doctors are very well paid, but that does not in itself say much about public health or justice. Yet if education is to get its share of the top recent figures for the qualifications of entrants to undergraduate education degrees are to be improved, more money has to be part of the solution.

The establishment of a General Teaching Council and associated efforts to make teaching more like the established professions of law and medicine are welcome; likewise the sentiment behind that otherwise silly proposal to give teachers and heads a bigger share of the spoils of the honours system. Raising the status of teaching is a noble end. But David Blunkett and his fellow ministers are surely under no illusion that their ambitions for schools, especially their tight targets for numeracy and literacy at age 11, entail improvements in the quality of teachers that will have to be bought with big money.

Mr Blunkett has his chance today

when he publishes the Government's letter of guidance to the teachers' pay review body. In an ideal world what he would say is that in the financial settlement for 1998-99 money will be provided in sufficient quantity. There will be millions, in other words, to raise starting salaries - because £16,000 is too little to tempt good young men and women into city schools. There will be hundreds of millions to raise finishing salaries - because good teachers have to be kept in the classroom as long as they can wield a pencil. It must be possible to keep the best teachers in the classroom, without forcing them out into management in order to earn decent money. Good teachers reach the top of the main teachers' pay scale as young as 27, and that has to be absurd.

Mr Blunkett ought also to tell the review body something the teacher unions would find very hard to swallow, but surely is a necessary part of the reformation of this profession and our schools. He should say that once general levels of reward have been lifted, there ought never again to be a "general pay settlement" giving all teachers a rise indiscriminately; that in future professional rewards should be inseparably linked with performance.

In the real world, Mr Blunkett will only be able to accomplish some of this. He has to contend with the com-

plexity of schools finance, which New Labour - so far - has done nothing to simplify. A notional sum for schools, which itself contains a notional sum to meet a hypothetical teachers' pay settlement, enters the global amount for 1998-99 allocated local authorities in their block grant in the autumn. They may choose to spend the official proportion of their grant on schools, they may choose even to augment it. But those decisions are up to them just as heads and governors control the detail of which teacher gets what. What all this means is that David Blunkett cannot directly effect - or

lubricate - changes that ensure teachers get paid for work out of hours, such as homework and holiday clubs. Perhaps the local authorities and the heads will all sing from his song sheet, but there is no guarantee of harmony. In arguing with his Cabinet colleagues for more money Mr Blunkett's case is necessarily weakened because he cannot assure them that his aims will be achieved.

Meanwhile the Government will ask the pay review body to bear all kinds of considerations in mind. The most important of these is the creation of a new grade - an "advanced skills

or "super" teacher. This, in principle, is exactly what is wanted: a way of paying good teachers to remain in the classroom. There is a lot of work to be done in fleshing it out, questions yet to be answered about how such pedagogical heroines and heroes are to be identified. In most schools, however, the evidence of good or bad performance is clear-cut enough to convince even the most blinkered union rep.

The quid pro quo has to be a faster track towards the removal from the schools of teachers who cannot control their charges or deliver on the attainment front. As even Chris Woodhead seems recently to have recognised, managing educational improvement in England and Wales is a subtle blend of sticks and carrots. A lot of cudgelling is needed, whether or not his figure of 15,000 "bad teachers" is precisely right. But so is praise, and pay for a job subjected - now, at last - to close and critical inspection of a kind many other professionals and the occupants of a host of other less demanding jobs manage to avoid.

So it is back to money. According to the official calculations behind the £2.3bn extra for education announced in Gordon Brown's July budget, around £1bn ought to be available to local authorities for improving standards. How much of this will be reserved for pay, in addition to the notional two-and-a-bit per cent that

will be entered into support grant calculations? It does not look as if the total sum available for the refreshment of teacher pay prospects and re-structuring the grading system is going to be adequate. The Government wants to effect a revolution in state education, and that cannot come cheap. For David Blunkett there is going to be no cut-price route to success.

William, use your head

Does William Hague think that he is somehow imbuing wisdom by periphrasing around the national periphery, as if political reality can be found "out there", like truth in *The X-Files*? Well, how much reality there is in a Cornish theme park is a matter for debate, but there probably isn't a lot at the end of a water chute.

Still, that's not really what this is about: it is about the Tory leader getting his hitherto unknown visage recognised in local newspapers and on local television stations around the provinces. No barn in that at all - indeed, a lot to be said for it. But lay off the "baseball cap casual". William: your older voters think it's childish, and the younger ones think you look - well, not to mince words, a bit of a prat in that hat.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Changing status of the Church

Sir: "The bells toll once more for the established C of E" - Donald Macintyre's article (the commentators, 1 August) is intriguing. I have just tabled what the General Synod grandly calls a Private Member's Motion for debate at the Synod (if it gets enough signatures), asking that the Church of England should get its act together on the whole question of disestablishment.

That Donald Macintyre should devote so much space to the matter adds weight to my sense that change in Church-State relationships is not only in the air but is also inevitable. Its effects will not be confined to the C of E but will touch a wide spectrum of religious organisations.

If the Church of England can meet this spirit of constitutional growth with national and comprehensive proposals, I believe that it can make a serious and worthwhile contribution to the shape of our society for years to come and that there is now an extraordinary opportunity for the established Church to fulfil its status, either by abolishing it or by radically changing it.

Either way, it will be loyal to Archbishop Temple's dictum about the Church existing for those who are not its members. The Rev BEN HOPKINSON
The Parishes of Stainton-in-Cleveland and Hilton-in-Cleveland Stainton, Middlesbrough

Sir: Regarding your recent correspondence there is a much better argument for disestablishment than the matrimonial affairs of the Prince of Wales: namely the hope of unity between the "mainline" churches in England - Anglican, Roman Catholic, Free Church - in the century that lies ahead.

If there is full sincerity in their prayers, affirmations, and conversations over the past decade and more, that is the end towards which they look, and it is hard to believe that a united Church of the future will wish to be yoked to a secularised state.

The British media have largely ignored the progress of the Ecumenical Movement, except occasionally at top level - gradual convergence being less sensational than conflict and controversy. Yet there are already more than 700 local Ecumenical partnerships in England, and plenty of evidence to suggest that denominational separation is less and less serviceable to the Christian cause.

It is true that there is no very strong pressure for disestablishment nowadays on the part of other churches. Establishment is hardly regarded as oppressive, as once it was, and loyalty and affection for the Queen extend far beyond Anglicans. And as your correspondent says (1 August), Parliament shows no great eagerness to grasp this nettle. The initiative for a first move, therefore, must lie with the Church of England itself.

There are more than 30 Provinces of the worldwide Anglican Communion that can encourage such a move by testifying that dispensing with a state connection does nothing to impede the mission of the Church. Bishop P CRODGER
Edinburgh



Eliminate wars without armies

Sir: George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defence, is wrong to assume ("Why we still need strong armed forces", 30 July) that rejecting military action implies taking no part at all in making the world a better place, and leaving the problems to others. I am appalled that he can think of no way other than armed combat or the threat of it ("negotiation from strength" as it is called) that might be worth considering.

During the years since 1939 there have been few, if any, periods during which there has been no armed conflict somewhere in the world, despite enormous increases in armed forces and advances in weapon technology. These conflicts have sprung from disagreements over religious, political and moral beliefs, ethnic traditions and acquisitive ambitions. It is doubtful that wars ever eliminate the desires or beliefs that lead to them. Does the defeated party ever, as a result of defeat, decide that it was mistaken in its belief or merely in its estimate of the enemy's strength?

Have any of the leaders of the great powers ever considered devoting some of the billions now spent on defences to exploring other possible long-term means of tackling the problems Mr Robertson has in mind? This would no doubt involve looking far into the future and not bopping for "quick fixes", looking for likely sources of aggression, poverty and famine, relying on education, willingness to listen to reason and accept compromises, economic aid and sanctions, and so on, without

even the threat of force. It would help if those involved had no connection with, and drew no profits from, the manufacture and supply of lethal weapons, since the proliferation of arms itself creates enemies.

I cannot take pride, as George Robertson wishes, in my country's skill in killing and maiming people, usually innocent ones, destroying cities and communications, and devising and profiting from the techniques for doing such things. How can one take seriously those who seek to eliminate or prevent war by warlike action or respect those who profit from the supply of the means, unless all other possibilities are exhausted? PETER ALEXANDER
Farnham, Surrey

Building with beautiful stone

Sir: J J Fergusson is absolutely right about "Mould-on-the-Wold" but he could have strengthened his case even more by noting the great variety of detail in the mummified heaps of stone that represent Cotswold towns and villages ("The Cotswolds, theme park for Little Englanders", 5 August). The detail reflects changes in style and taste as well as functional everyday life across several centuries and none of it would be there today had previous planners operated today's restrictive practices.

The exhaustive use of the one building material reflected only its

abundance and availability, not architectural taste, and other indigenous building materials colour other parts of England equally gloriously, but not to the exclusion of change and development. Where Cotswold planners err is in their arrogant eschewing of variety that always existed.

Nevertheless the Cotswolds have significant and undeniable natural, geographical beauty that is as worth conserving as in a national park. MERVYN BENFORD
Banbury, Oxfordshire

How to improve air quality

Sir: Research suggesting that traffic pollution triggers 6,000 heart attacks a year in Britain will further compound pressure upon New Labour to prove its "green" credentials (report, 5 August). One of the last acts of the Tory government was to publish the UK's first National Air Quality Strategy.

Last month the Minister for the Environment, Michael Meacher MP, announced an immediate review of this strategy, accusing the "last government of failing to tackle pollution successfully despite its 'green' rhetoric".

If the present government is to fare any better, it must take urgent action to cut further harmful emissions from road traffic. The measures needed are well understood: national traffic

reduction targets; road tax linked to emissions for cars; tax breaks for cleaner fuels such as gas and ultra-low sulphur diesel; taxing private non-residential parking; congestion charging and a national vehicle identification scheme to allow the exclusion of older, dirtier vehicles from polluted urban areas; the power for local authorities to require bus and taxi operators to meet enhanced emissions standards, and ensure that large employers draw up green commuter plans.

Reviews, consultations and photo-opportunities are no substitute for effective action to protect public health. Dr MALCOLM EAMES
National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection Brighton

Floating in a 1950s hotel

Sir: Perhaps the Government should do with *Britannia* what we all do with some beloved old "banger" that really has to go - sell it to someone who'll appreciate it, in this case as a fine example of 1950s ship design and buy something that is more up to date with Her Majesty's circumstances.

Rather than decommission *Britannia*, I suggest keeping it as a sort of prestige floating hotel that spends most of its time in the harbours and ports of the UK. W H BELLCHAMBERS
Uckfield, East Sussex

Recycling car metal eyesores

Sir: Contrary to the caption, your photograph ("August is the cruellest month on the forecourt", 31 July) shows an accumulation of scrapped cars awaiting conversion into furnace feed for the metallurgical industries; they are not on a landfill site.

On average, 75 per cent of the weight of a redundant car is recycled. Some parts will be reused, but the hulks shown in your photograph will be processed by member companies of the British Metals Federation to yield ferrous and non-ferrous metals that will eventually be recycled into new products of many kinds. The remaining 25 per cent consists of plastic, rubber, fabric, glass and a good deal of dirt which presents some major challenges to recycling technology.

However, the UK motor, recycling and other industries involved have committed themselves to raise total recovery to 85 per cent by 2002 and 95 per cent by 2015. This will require new techniques and technology, but especially an innovative approach to car design so that recovery of non-metallic materials can become a practical proposition.

In the meantime, metals recycling companies will continue to reclaim every possible fragment of metal in a vehicle body, landfilling only the currently non-recyclable residue. In doing so they are freeing the environment of the sort of eyesore shown in your picture. R J WILCOX
Executive Director British Metals Federation Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Living without free furniture

Sir: I was dismayed by Roy Hattersley's demand for increased financial help for the unemployed ("Labour's mission is power, not the poor", 30 July) and particularly by the two examples he used.

I earn £720 net per month for a 40-hour week. From this I pay £250 mortgage costs and £52 council tax. This leaves me £420 per month to support my wife (non-earning) and two children. This is far less than the "just over £500 after housing costs and council tax" received by the unemployed family of two adults and two children. In addition I pay £48 each month on train fares to work.

Like the second example, when I first purchased my shell of a house I had no money for furniture and for two years my wife and baby son slept on the floor until I had saved enough money for a bed. No politicians urged that we be given free furniture as Roy Hattersley does for the non-working. I voted for New Labour because I resented large chunks of my meagre wages being taken in taxes by the previous government and given to those too lazy to work for a living.

Incidentally, unlike the sample family we never go short of food - perhaps this family do so because they choose to spend their benefit money on less important things. ROBIN BASAK
Hitchin, Hertfordshire

Waiting patiently in préfectures

Sir: As a British citizen living in France, I would just like to say how closely I can relate to John Lichfield's problems in getting a "Carte de Séjour" and translations of birth certificates ("France ensnares foreigners in baffling tangle of red tape", 2 August). These are exactly the difficulties working people and students from other EU countries face when settling in France.

There are far-reaching consequences, because these documents are needed should you want to claim housing benefit, unemployment benefit or to exchange your driving licence for a French one, just to give a few examples.

I have grown to accept this as part of French officialdom and, like John Lichfield, calmly doze off and wait patiently in préfectures. But what I would really like to know is if it is as difficult for an EU citizen to get these things done in the UK. ANTONY FLEGMANN
Llandudno, North Wales

Missing listeners

Sir: Matthew Bannister, explaining the reasoning behind the BBC's forthcoming changes to Radio 3 and Radio 4 (Letters, 4 August), brings out the hoary old excuse that it's all based on what the listeners want. Where are all these listeners who want drastic changes to the networks? They certainly aren't writing in to newspapers, or even the BBC itself. Why are they so reticent to defend their views?

Here in Brighton, the BBC's local Southern Counties Radio dropped all music and became a speech-only station a year or more ago, explaining to all those who complained - and there were many - that this was "what the listeners wanted". As from September, they will be reintroducing music. Who are we to believe? IAN BUXTON
Brighton, East Sussex

analysis

In the Eighties and Nineties, New Zealand led the world in the zeal of its free market reforms. David Walker, just returned, has a warning for New Labour of the political risks of such radicalism

I have seen the future, and it works, they said, a stream of think-tankers, consultants and MPs who in recent years have returned from New Zealand praising its "revolution in government". In London, red carpets have been unrolled for the likes of former NZ Treasury minister Sir Roger Douglas, powerhouse of the Eighties reforms. But having just returned from Wellington, I am tempted to say: I have seen the past and it doesn't work.

The sheep (much reduced in number) are still grazing the Canterbury Plains, the All Blacks last month worsted the old Aussie enemy and last week they were enjoying the fireworks in downtown Auckland; but politically speaking, New Zealand is an unhappy, edgy country. The economy is stagnant, exports flat. Old worries surface about young Kiwis leaving the country never to return. Television news leads with stories of wheels dropping off planes flown by (under-regulated) privatised airlines. Preparations for electricity privatisation are pulling the country apart – as North and South Islands fight over power supply. Crime is rising: in parts of Auckland youth gangs regularly gather to throw stones at police.

Wherever you go people talk about the "social question" – jobs, youth, provision for the elderly, ethnic disparities. Prime Minister Jim Bolger makes heart-wringing speeches invoking the spirit of community, aka cheap ways of looking after the country's growing numbers of old people. And Sir Roger Douglas has left Labour far behind – he is now a leader of the far-right ACT (Association of Consumers and Taxpayers) party.

It does not feel much like a model. A lot has been made of the way New Zealand contracted-out services and introduced competition into its public sector – it has even gone as far as government ministers entering into contracts with their permanent secretaries to provide them with advice. But

there is no hard-and-fast evidence that services are delivered any more efficiently there than elsewhere. On the contrary: if the central measure of the effectiveness of a state is public trust in and appreciation of its government, New Zealand is a case study in failure – levels of mistrust of and outright disdain for government are at an all-time high.

This has nothing to do with sleaze. The recent revelation that a former New Zealand high commissioner had used the polished dining-room table in the Commission to consummate his sexual relations left most Kiwis amused. In fact their country consistently scores near the top of the league for lack of financial corruption.

It has to do with the compact that has to exist between government and government if the state is to be effective. New Zealand is an object lesson in committing the government of a pluralist and democratic welfare state to theorists and ideological hard-liners from the neo-liberal right wing – as if we in Britain needed one. What they do is destroy public trust in government, which is indeed one of the legacies of the era of Conservative dominance just ended in this country. New Zealand shows how, eventually, radical right-wing government is self-defeating. "Roger-nomics", as the New Zealanders christened their version of what the Americans experienced as Reaganism and we as Thatcherism, doesn't work.

Take reform of pensions and arrangements for old age, a subject close to New Labour's heart. This autumn New Zealanders are due to vote in a referendum on a government proposal for compulsory private pensions. Polls say it will be conclusively rejected. One reason is that Kiwis actually trust state provision, especially over the long haul. They don't trust the grand promises of their right-of-centre politicians that private is necessarily better.

Moral for Blairites: make sure the people trust you before putting forward long-term pro-

grammes of financial change.

New Zealand is a small country with only 3.5 million people. Unlike Australia it was settled by free men and women. Given its common heritage and parliamentary tradition, it is a place where people ought to trust

their government. Yet in the Eighties it experienced an episode of radical top-down institutional reform. But unlike that in the UK, change was powered by a Labour government responding to financial and economic crisis.

On coming to power in 1984 David Lange's government pushed through a raft of measures breaking decisively with New Zealand's consensual past. Public spending and tariffs were cut, civil servants put on performance contracts, the central bank given operational autonomy, farm supports slashed and the NZ dollar floated. When Labour was replaced by the National Party (hitherto moderate Tories) the revolution continued. Town and country planning as we know it was abolished, social benefits were

cut. Privatisation steamed ahead, services were contracted out and a Fiscal Responsibility Act was introduced to bear down permanently on tax and spending. The NZ state now consumes 34 per cent of national product, a figure British Tories still dream of – the British state is still worth around 41 per cent.

For the neo-conservatives what New Zealand did made the country an antipodean paradise. Gurus and government ministers descended on Wellington to hail the simplest of simple propositions – cut government and all your troubles disappear. The great thing about New Zealand was that the ostensible left had also swallowed the medicine.

In retrospect a lot of what happened in New Zealand went with the flow of the Eighties, at least in Britain and the US – the

Continentalists have so far found the doctrine less appealing. Some of New Zealand's reforms were necessary and inevitable. World economic conditions in the Seventies and Eighties meant that New Zealand would have to do more than produce dairy products, wool, sheep meat and sportsmen; and one way or another it would have had to sort out a public finance mess bequeathed by (National Party) Prime Minister Robert Muldoon.

What was distinctive – and odd – about New Zealand was the doctrinal certitude of the politicians and officials who carried out the changes. Here was a country priding itself on British-style pragmatism surrendering to theory. Here was a broadly tolerant and secular nation getting true religion in a bad way.

There is no denying the politi-



A cautionary tale from down under



Exploding the myth: main picture, the new Auckland Tower. Above, David Lange; left, Jim Bolger (former and present prime ministers). Photographs: Reuters/UPP



ical success of the revolutionaries, led by Sir Roger Douglas and staffed by a group of civil servants in the Treasury, with outposts in Business Round-table and other lobbying organisations. Within a decade the radical right had succeeded in abolishing the New Zealand welfare state – in the face of consistent public support for its principles. Governments changed but the radical right remains in power. It is still a potent presence, now working on proposals to set up toll booths (or their electronic equivalent) on rural roads. "Users ought to pay," they cry, not realising or caring that New Zealand's extensive network of rural roads is what keeps the country in one piece, socially speaking.

The radicals' promise was clear: cut government and the economy would be free to soar, carrying the people into a new heaven of material prosperity where they alone would choose what to spend on their health, social security and so forth. What the revolutionaries did not add was that their version of Reaganomics would make New Zealand a much less equal society and now also a less safe one. They did not care to foresee that the reforms would create a new class of high-rolling consultants and business executives for whom greed was good and some of the most attractive features of a pastoral, egalitarian society would be lost forever.

In the early Nineties, the promise of material prosperity looked as if it were being realised. Economic growth soared as New Zealand adapted to new patterns of trade with Japan and other Asian neighbours. The exchange rate fell, encouraging exports. But now the boom is over and only a true believer would claim the New Zealand economy has been left in permanently fine fettle. Inflation has been brought down; but that is a common or garden

achievement these days. The trick is to match low inflation and jobs and growth, and New Zealand has nothing to teach us or anyone else here.

Meanwhile, New Zealand politics and society are in a mess. Anxious about Opposition pledges on proportional representation, Prime Minister Jim Bolger committed the National Party to a referendum on PR; the country said yes and the first elections on the new franchise were held last autumn. The result was a coalition between National and a new party, New Zealand First, a mixture of Maori representatives and "none of the above". Six months on, the coalition is in the dumps. New Zealand First's rating is negligible and polls show voters want yet another referendum, this time to reject PR and restore first past the post.

Kiwis have not lost their solidity – such volatility needs an explanation. The most obvious is that people feel betrayed by governments that have pushed change too far and too fast. People said to me: we voted Labour in the Eighties and we got right-wing radicalism; we voted conservative in the Nineties and we got right-wing radicalism: something is wrong with the political system.

What the public wants more than anything is a long period of pragmatic administration: no more shocks, no more experiments – but a lot more social spending and a lot less of the cynicism that recently prompted Prime Minister Bolger to say he would rather give \$500 to the city mission than his own social welfare department.

Sir Roger Douglas used to argue in the patronising way of Thatcherites that consensus would develop after the hard decisions had delivered growth, prosperity and lower taxes. But there's been little growth lately and even less consensus. The neo-liberals in New Zealand have failed.

People want to recover social solidarity and mutual concern. Tony Blair and colleagues do not have to travel to the other side of the globe to take the lesson – it was surely one of the principal reasons why people voted for them on May 1.



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Talk about sex? Please, don't tempt me

So far it hasn't been easy for me to follow the Family Planning Association's weekend injunction to talk about sex at least once a day. My partner is at her mother's (no, things are fine, thank you), and I don't really like to go up to complete strangers, to neighbours, or to people at work and begin to tell them about my sexual fantasies. I suppose some might regard it as an interesting form of revenge upon over-garrulous taxi drivers, to return their thoughts on the new government with an alarming disquisition on the quality of the male orgasm. One might certainly get to one's destination more quickly.

The other problem – which is less practical but more important – is that I'm not at all sure it's a good idea anyway. Not for the reasons that Ann Widdecombe gave on radio the other day: Ms Widdecombe feels that there is too much sex around, and I on the whole believe the opposite. But the orthodoxy that couples should – as far as possible – be honest with one another and discuss their sexual

feelings openly, that strikes me as being completely wrong-headed. Couples, on the whole, know what they want to know. Most women, for instance, cannot cope with the idea that a man has a sexual past. They do not want to be told about past girlfriends, or first masturbation, or how a bloke lost his virginity. The image of the loved one that they have constructed in their own heads is the one that they wish to persist with; they do not want it hurled out by a series of invading, contrary pictures. Men, on the other hand, often want at first to colonise their lovers' pasts – with the objective of turning them into versions of the Whig Version of History – a clear progression from barbarism and dissatisfaction, to enlightenment and incredible pleasure. Women often co-operate with this process, airbrushing past lovers out of the picture with almost Stalinist alacrity.

But if history is dangerous, it is nothing compared with the present. Men are simply much badder than women realise. Does a wife really want to be told that – though



David Aaronovitch

her husband loves her dearly – he is in a state of hormonal agitation all summer because of pert young breasts pushed against flimsy blouses, or nipples outlined in tank-tops, or bare midriffs – the line of the navel leading the eye steadily down... Oh dear. Sorry about that. The fact that it gets worse as the man gets older simply makes it all the more pathetic.

So, his fantasies, she can do without. And if she has any it is – as an old friend of mine used to say – Lombard Street to a china orange that he doesn't want to hear

about them. Generally the two of them can rub along together – literally – doing what pleases and minding their own businesses. They have discovered what works and what doesn't, and that is the great and glorious characteristic of long-term partnerships.

The desirability of this ambiguity was brought home to me this week when reading a story in one of the less cerebral of our newspapers, concerning a 27-year-old woman who has Sliders Phenomenon. Debbie Wolf gives off large quantities of static electricity. Ever since she was 12, people who shake her hand or cuddle her have got minor shocks. TV channels sometimes change when she enters a room, car indicators and street lamps flash on and off at her approach. But, according to Debbie, the most remarkable aspect of her condition is that when she is sexually excited, her effect on electrical appliances around her becomes almost dangerous. Fridges turn on and off and light bulbs explode.

Now, you can fake orgasm, whether you're male or

female, but you cannot fake an exploding fridge. Debbie Wolf is unable to dissemble – placing a voltmeter by the bed will give a precise measurement of her response to practically anything sexual. Sliders means that when she passes men she fancies, or her lover does something that she doesn't like so much, her feelings become instantly apparent.

Consider for a moment how disastrous it would be if this happened to you, right now. It would be like establishing a running commentary on your sexual feelings. Every pertness you passed would be registered, as though you were continually telling your partner: "Look at her!" or even, "Look at the buns on him!" Your temporary lack of interest while you did something that your partner really liked, but that wasn't such a turn-on for you, would be instantly revealed. The gateway between the absolutely private, and the admitted, would stand always ajar. I cannot think of any surer recipe for divorce.

Miles Kingston is on holiday

Why the Internet means a bright future for our cities

At last, our cities are starting to get the recognition they deserve. London and a few others will get an elected mayor – not much of a gesture towards the importance of one of the great powerhouses of the world economy, but a start.

The overcentralisation of government means that Britain has far fewer cities than most other countries of the same size. The great, fat toad of Whitehall bureaucracy, whose powers grew even more inflated during the Conservative years even as it spat out surplus civil servants, inhibited the vigour of urban centres outside London and kept the capital itself from realising its full potential.

Now, though, there is a great opportunity for political decentralisation to coincide with deep economic trends in opening up the possibility of an urban renaissance. We stand at the threshold of a new era of city brilliance for the first time since the end of last century, when the very names of London, Liverpool and Glasgow conjured up images of glamour, wealth, excitement and excitement.

Economic growth has always been essentially urban. The national romantic obsession with the countryside obscures this truth, but the country is a parasite on urban wealth. About four-fifths of us live and work in cities and suburbs. And the number of skyscrapers on the metropolitan skyline is probably one of the best indicators of the nation's economic growth.

The reason for fresh optimism is the slow but enormous impact of new computer and communications technologies on the economy. On the face of it there is a paradox here. Why should particular places become more important at a time when you might think the new technology is making location irrelevant?

After all, there are tales *ad nauseam* about happy telecommuters working from their country cottages. What's more, modern telecommunications are allowing big companies to relocate staff away from expensive cities to cheaper small towns.

But this modern myth of rural renewal assumes that telecommunications and computers are only a substitute for face-to-face contact. In fact, they complement it and make it easier. The Internet makes it possible for two people on opposite sides of the planet to make each other's acquaintance. And what do they do? They visit each other for holidays and they even get married. They would not have known of each other's existence without new technology, and here they are choosing curtains together.

And, after all, the icon of the computer industry, Silicon Valley, is all in one place. Silicon Valley has the easiest access to the latest and best in information technology, yet its computer needs all hang out together near LA rather than dispersing with laptop and modem to the world's best beaches. As Edward Glaeser, a professor at Harvard University, puts it: "This agglomeration probably occurs because the industry relies so heavily on interactions and has so much knowledge to be transferred across firms and individuals."

At the same time, the cutting-edge industries in modern economies are making personal interaction more and more valuable. The hits



Diane Coyle

Deep economic trends are creating the possibility of an urban renaissance. We stand at the threshold of a new era of city brilliance

of modern economies that are expanding the fastest and producing the most wealth – as Tony Blair recognised with his Number 10 party guest list – include the hits many people still see as frivolous. Financial services, consultancy and the like are important, certainly, and we have a national advantage in those. But so are movies, music, multimedia, fashion, design, software and video games – anything involving creativity. These are the engines of our future wealth and prosperity. Creativity thrives on other people, on the exchange of ideas, on the buzz at parties, on fads and fashions.

It can be hard to get across the point that Britain is more important for the future of our economy than British Steel. Old-fashioned manufacturing exercises a tyranny over the national imagination and is probably fated to arouse more passion than its actual importance warrants.

The fact remains that the really important industries of the future, which all depend on new technology for their creation and distribution, will make people congregate in the big cities more than ever. The pubs of Soho, the clubs of Manchester, will be the equivalent of the dockside taverns in London and Glasgow a century ago. They will be places where the new wealth-creators, like their merchant forebears, go to gossip, exchange ideas or find new jobs.

The economic revival of cities will launch a virtuous circle, too. The presence of people – especially if they are making a lot of

money – creates a demand for more and more people to provide services, whether retailing and restaurants or cleaners and security guards. There are clear signs of this in London. The fastest-growing areas of employment during the current boom have been in precisely these areas. There are staff shortages in central London, unsatisfied even by the constant inflow of young foreigners.

The new economy is going to be more urban than ever, and we are lucky in Britain to have centres of creativity such as London and Manchester, Oxford and Cambridge for science, software and education, and – with luck – Edinburgh as well which could join the premier league once it gets its parliament. But past centralisation means the UK has too few cities.

In most developed countries there is a rule of thumb that the number of cities with a population above a certain size is proportionate to the population level. Thus although the US has nine cities with above four million inhabitants, it also has 20 with more than two million, and 40 cities with more than a million. This pattern is repeated in Germany, Italy and Japan. The UK, in fact, is one of only two for which the rule breaks down. France, overshadowed by Paris and its serried ranks of technocrats, is the other.

Allowing London and a few other big cities to elect their own mayor is only a start. With any luck, it is a symbol of the Government's honourable intention to devolve power. For local politicians will have a better idea of what their thriving local industries need than Whitehall bureaucrats lunching with lobbyists for the 1945 to Esher.

Can our squaddies ever be kept in line?

by Christopher Bellamy

Is there something special about Cyprus that sends supposedly disciplined, professional soldiers berserk? Or are the British Armed Forces – particularly the Army – suffering from a major crisis of discipline that reflects a wider cultural crisis?

The latest trial of British soldiers for behaving very badly in Cyprus is the result of both, though mostly of the latter. The cultural crisis has far wider ramifications: the Army's recruiting problems, and the allegation by a serving major earlier this week that it is paralysed by an anachronistic class structure. Can this be the Army that combined combat skills with compassion, diplomacy and restraint to such a remarkable degree in Bosnia, and whose recruiting slogan is so unambiguous, and yet so often let down – "Be the best"?

Some sources in the British military believe the breakdown of discipline is because they are being forced to do too many different things – that indiscipline is a result of the erosion of traditional military culture and the draconian system that kept the military in order. Soldiers are no longer subject to the horrific punishments of a generation or so ago – like that meted out to the prisoners in the film *The Hill* – let alone the Victorian remedy of flogging and the First World War use of the firing squad and "field punishment number one": being crucified, naked on a gunwheel, for hours, preferably between November and March.

The spotlight has been on Cyprus ever since the horrific murder of Danish tour guide Louise Jensen by three drunken members of the Royal Green Jackets two years ago. The British authorities worked very hard to restore good relations with the local community. Just as they thought they had succeeded, three Royal Marines who were in Cyprus on "adventure training" were arrested for dancing stark naked, singing "God Save the Queen". Elsewhere, and at another time, it might have been excused as a high-spirited prank. But the Commandant-General of the Marines – the Navy's formally disciplined sea-soldiers – took a very dim view, rightly, and banned the Corps from Cyprus.

The British Armed Forces were on the defensive again yesterday as four soldiers from the King's Regiment went on trial for assault, occasioning grievous bodily harm on two "tourists" in the resort of Ayia Napa, which was again put out of bounds to British troops. The British Army had met British holiday-makers, and predictably, the latter came off worse. As one officer put it yesterday, it was "probably like against like – though that is no excuse". The two British battalions – currently 1st Battalion, The



Justin Fowler, left, and Jeff Parnell, of the Royal Green Jackets; they were later convicted of the murder of a Danish tour guide, Louise Jensen, in Cyprus

The kind of discipline needed for a 21st century army might be closer to a medieval order of warrior monks

Light Infantry in Episkopi and the King's Regiment in Dhekelia – are nothing to do with the UN force which separates the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. They are there to defend the Sovereign Base areas, and to operate and defend the airfield at Akrotiri. A member of a Greek Cypriot family who was in Cyprus recently summarised the local view. "I don't think they do anything. They just act as firemen – because it's so hot and there are lots of hush fires. There's a lot of resentment between them and the Greek Cypriots – they're just there to start trouble. They walk around like they own the place."

The Greek Cypriots see no reason for the British (as

opposed to the UN) presence, and would not mind very much if the British left, especially as they are bad for tourism. The Army says the incidence of bad behaviour involving troops in Cyprus is no worse than anywhere else, and far less than among the same group of young men – 18- to 25-year-olds, by and large of the same class – in the rest of society. Fights between soldiers and civilians may involve an element of provocation. For macho men on holiday, taking on British soldiers may be perceived as a manly thing to do. It is certainly a risky one. Drink has a lot to do with the problem, just as it does in civilian life. In Bosnia, where soldiers are on active service, they are

limited to two cans of beer a night, and there are very few problems. But none of these statistics will satisfy the public. The problem is that people expect the forces to live up to their advertising, and to be better than the rest of society: in some cases, even, to turn the other cheek.

Soldiers have always been a rough lot, and have always liked a drink. Wellington was fond of

calling his soldiers "the scum of the earth". He knew them well. "The British soldiers are fellows who have all enlisted for drink – that is the plain fact," he wrote. "I don't know what effect these men will have on the enemy, but, by God, they frighten me." It is a sentiment felt by many officers ever since – including myself, as a 19-year-old second lieutenant in charge of a dozen Royal Artillerymen arriving in a one-horse town in the Rocky mountains, hundreds of miles from my unit. (The boys wanted to get down to some serious partying in the local saloon and I, terrified of the men and of losing control, was forced to acquiesce.)

The armies of earlier times, and their fondness for drink, were controlled by a discipline that was ferocious, arbitrary, and sometimes unjust. But it was effective. Soldiers were treated like robots, to be turned against the enemy, and were kept out of normal society when not in use.

The problem now is that the Army has to treat its soldiers like grown-ups. The law, both national and European, demands it. By and large, they behave like grown-ups. In a few cases they do not, and those are the cases that make the headlines. There are increasing opportunities for women in the forces, and legal pressures to try to increase recruitment of ethnic minorities. But while the Army is trying to do that, it lacks the old disciplinary mechanisms to enforce its new political correctness. If a racist attack on a fellow soldier or beating up a civilian was punishable by flogging, such attacks would probably cease. But that sanction is not available. Nor can the professional, well-qualified soldiers the Army wants be locked up like criminals.

The soldier of the new world order will have to be a different animal, and the transformation is not complete. The kind of discipline needed for a 21st century army, combining weapons of awesome power with conducting diplomacy and tending the sick might be closer to a medieval order of warrior monks. Our society might find that even more threatening – with some reason. And is that what we want? As General Sir John Hackett pointed out in his 1983 book *The Profession of Arms*, "What a society gets in its armed forces is exactly what it asks for, no more, no less. What it asks for tends to be a reflection of what it is. The mirror is a true one, and the face it will see will be its own."

The traveller enters a lost kingdom

The blind at the window of the sleeper clattered shut to reveal that the train was crossing the Tamar. The broad river, silvery in the dawn light, is the oldest frontier in Europe – its eastern border having been declared by Athelstan in the 9th century to be the border between England and Cornwall.

The crossing appeared to work its magic on a young woman named Margaret who had seemed brisk and efficient when the train left London the night before but who had now become friendly and forthcoming. She leaned out of the window after I stepped from the train at Liskeard. "It's a different country here – slower and more relaxed."

Indeed it was. I was on my fourth mug of tea in the tiny station buffet when Paul Naylor arrived. The diminutive figure, with wild hair and a curly beard, gave every appearance of having just leapt out of bed. For all that he launched straight into an instant history of the Duchy of Cornwall and the succession it has maintained, technically independent of the British monarchy.

Naylor, the owner of a local vineyard who stood for parliament in the general election for the Sons of Cornwall party, Mbevon Kernow, continued the history lesson as we toured the ancient Cornish sites of the area in his battered Volvo. It spluttered and wheezed, but from its radio aerial there proudly fluttered a black pennant with a white cross, the flag of St Pirr, patron saint of Cornwall.

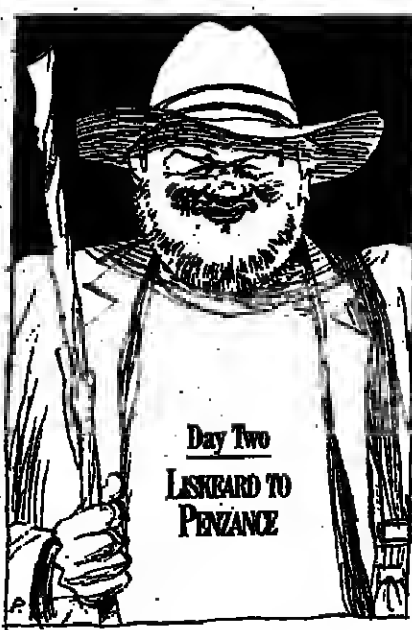
There are more miles of winding country lanes in Cornwall than anywhere else in Britain, he explained as we tramped across the rough wet

grass of Fowey Moor, because the distinctive settlement patterns of the Celts had survived, along with their place-names. The culture was the island's most antique: Celts had sacked Delphi in 400 BC and Rome in 300 BC. The Galatians, to whom St Paul epistolised, spoke Celtic until the 4th century AD. With delight he pointed out the mistakes in the official signs at the monument of the 9th century king, Dunstan, and gloated over how the "English" Heritage symbol had been obliterated by Cornish nationalists from many of the historical sites. "The English are like dogs," he said. "They go round pissing on everything." There was a salty turn to all his aphorisms. The day before he had been "popping in and out of the house like a fart in a colander". His sense of disbelief was conveyed with, "If that's true then my cock's a bloater."

That sense of incredulity was exercised most forcefully on Tony Blair's notion of what constitutes devolution within the UK. For devolutionary purposes Cornwall has been lumped in with Devon and various points east as far as Swindon. It is to be administered from Bristol, which is farther from Cornwall than you might think. "Bristol is nearer to Dover than it is to Land's End. We need a separate Cornish Development Agency," said Colin Lawry, a nationalist councillor on both the district and county councils.

There are some serious economic issues here. "The GDP of Cornwall is less than three-quarters of the UK average. We have more in common with Merseyside than a wealthy place like Torbay in Devon. Our economy is almost colonial: so much

A JOURNEY AROUND THE WHOLE ISLAND OF GREAT BRITAIN



WITH PAUL VALLEY

of the raw material extracted here – fish, tin and china clay – isn't processed here. Almost £100m a year more goes out of Cornwall than comes in.

It is an argument which clearly has some potency in Cornwall where the flag of St Pirr is today everywhere in evidence, on buildings and bumper-stickers alike. Many insist on entering "Cornish" under "nationality" on official forms. They have revived the Cornish language enough to get it declared an official living language by the European Union.

Yet it is an uphill struggle. That evening I sought out, in the non-touristic back streets of Penzance, a pub called The Old Vic, where the landlord, Trev Lawrence, is a Grand Bard of the Gorsedd, the Cornish equivalent of the Welsh Eisteddfod. There, I was told, Cornish speakers gathered to talk, sing and play a traditional card game called *evchre*.

Indeed it was so. In a dark snug, devoid of one-armed bandits, jukebox or pinball machines, Trev held court from behind a well-worn mahogany bar, dispensing pints and quips in equal measure. From a cupboard he produced a jacket of heavy yellowed linen with waxed rope buckles, like a fasten-it-yourself strait-jacket. It was the essential equipment for the oldest form of wrestling known on these islands, dating back to the games recorded in County Leith in the 18th century BC. A stickler (as in rules) is, he explained, one of the three judges in Cornish wrestling.

But there was something morose about it all. True, there were

Cornish speakers in the corner of the pub, five of them. But only one was Cornish, and she had crossed the Tamar aged two and only recently returned. The group were otherwise middle-aged, middle-class English incomers ignorant at how the local authority had demoted the GCSE in Cornish from a language to a hobby course, thus raising the cost of their classes. Of the hundreds of reported native fluent speakers there was no sign. Still, they were jolly, full of badinage and song – some of it in Cornish.

The trouble is, said an increasingly morose Trev as the evening drew to a close, "that though the words are in Cornish all the old traditional harmonies have vanished."

Perhaps someone wrote them down in a book. I gamely suggested, and then doubtless some self-conscious young enthusiast will try to revive them.

"Maybe," said Trev. But he would be leaving the pub soon, and his lifelong struggle to retain one indigenous hostility in the town would end. He was 58 and his wife was ill and having to give up her job. It was her wage which subsidised his celebration of the community of nationhood. So they would be selling up soon. The Old Vic would then presumably be taken over by a brewery and converted into a chrome and Perspex lager drain or, worse still, a Scruffy Murphy's heritage pub.

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL
OF THE YEAR

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NatWest shares dive after bid ruled out

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

NatWest revealed the full extent of problems at its troubled investment banking subsidiary yesterday but denied that NatWest Markets was up for sale. The group's shares fell sharply on disappointing first-half profits and the perception that recent talks which might have led to a takeover of the group had been abandoned.

Lord Alexander, chairman, dismissed recent speculation about the future of NatWest as "overblown and fevered" and gave Derek Wanless, the group's chief executive, a forceful vote of confidence. Both Mr Wanless and Lord Alexander have come under pressure in recent weeks following an embarrassing derivatives loss in February, the loss of NatWest Markets' chief executive and leaked merger talks with both Abbey National and Prudential.

Claiming recent press comments about the bank had firmed his resolve, the chairman added: "We have a strong, robust independent future and we are clear that we have the ability to improve through our own organic efforts."

NatWest's statement of its commitment to independence sent the group's shares 35.5p lower to 834.5p, reversing some of the gains since the beginning of May when takeover speculation started to surround the share price. Lord Alexander scotched rumours that merger discussions had foundered on the proposed allocation of senior executive positions: "They were exploratory talks and never got near talking about jobs."

Underlying group pre-tax profits of £75m were marginally ahead of the forecast made at the time of NatWest's profits warning in June, but analysts left

a meeting with the bank yesterday unconvinced that it was fully addressing its perceived weaknesses. "Can do better was the message," one said.

John Leonard, analyst at Salomon Brothers, said: "The new divisional breakdown really lays out how weak parts of NatWest Markets have been." Another complained: "It is hard to see what key programmes they have got in place to get NatWest Markets to perform better."

The City was also disappointed by an apparent abandonment of any plans to return excess capital to shareholders through a share buy-back. According to Mr Wanless, the group's capital base was in line with its target range, disappointing analysts who had hoped for a return of up to £700m to shareholders. The dividend for the six months to June was also less generous than expected, up 10 per cent to 10.6p a share.

Group profits were driven by more than doubled profits from NatWest UK, the core retail and commercial banking operation. Profits of £453m from that division compared with £222m, but last year's figure was distorted by the cost of disposals and branch closures. Before these costs, the rise in profits was a more subdued 4 per cent and Mr Wanless struck a pessimistic note on the prospects for income growth in retail banking, which has become increasingly competitive.

The rise in profits at NatWest UK disguised a collapse in profits from NatWest Markets from £219m to £58m. That represented a fall in profits even after the £85m hit attributed to an interest rate option pricing error early in the half. A cover up of that derivatives loss has since cost the jobs of six senior executives, including the chief executive, Martin Owen.

NatWest Markets suffered from a sharp rise in its cost base following the recent acquisitions of businesses costing more than £1bn. The purchases of Gleacher, Greenwich Capital and Hambro Magan contributed to a £30m rise in the division's operating income but led to a 51 per cent jump in costs from £398m to £600m.

NatWest Markets made a return on the capital employed in the business of only 2.4 per cent during the half year, which Mr Wanless admitted was "inadequate". That return compared with more than 25 per cent from the core high street bank and dragged the group total down to 13.4 per cent, below NatWest's own 17.5 per cent target.

Even that increase would leave NatWest well behind its best performing rivals such as Lloyds TSB, which last week unveiled a sharp rise in its return on equity to over 40 per cent. Mr Wanless insisted last week's reorganisation, which sees NatWest Markets predictable and highly profitable treasury operation taken back into the group, was not just a cosmetic exercise. "I'm confident now, with the new management in place, that they'll get the return up."

It was announced last week that Konrad "Chip" Kruger, an internal candidate, would lead NatWest Markets as chief executive. Mr Wanless refuted the accusation that Mr Kruger's appointment followed a failure to attract a heavyweight outsider to the position.

Questioned on possible acquisitions, Mr Wanless said it made strategic sense for NatWest to expand its interests in long-term savings and pensions by buying an insurance company. But he said current valuations made a deal unlikely. Comment, page 17



Sir Ronnie Hampel unveiling his report, which was criticised for failing to take the corporate governance debate forward

Photograph: FT

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Hampel report wins big business backing

Dismissing accusations of complacency, he added: "I don't see anything macho in producing a revolution. We think the total document sets the proper framework for governance." He admitted that he had questioned whether the committee had been necessary in the first place and said he hoped there would not be another "in the foreseeable future."

The report was roundly criticised by Pirc, a leading corporate governance consultancy, which said it was a "sideways shuffle" and a "missed opportunity which failed to take the debate forward."

Anne Simpson, Pirc's joint managing director, said: "If Ronnie Hampel set out not to make history, he has succeeded. In a rising stock market it is easy to forget the importance of rigour. And to advise common

sense is to state the obvious. While the report has some positive elements it does not take the debate any further forward than Cadbury five years ago."

As expected, the Hampel committee rejected calls for continental-style two-tier boards saying the unitary board had overwhelming support. Hopes for a shareholder vote on executive remuneration were also dashed with Sir Ronnie say-

ing such matters could be discussed in the normal round of meetings between companies and institutional investors. The main changes were that non-executive directors should form at least a third of the board and that companies should use their annual meetings more effectively by including a presentation to shareholders.

The report fudged the issue of whether the chairman and chief executive roles should be split. It said that while separation was preferable, there might be circumstances where a combination was workable.

A "lead" non-executive director should be appointed and named in the annual report to ensure that no abuse of power took place. Some shareholder groups were disappointed that the report included no requirement for institutional investors to publish their voting policies. However, it did say institutions should adopt a considered policy on voting their shares.

The Government declined to make an immediate decision on whether it would take action. Business organisations welcomed the report.

Comment, page 17

Booming services set to force rate hike

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Service industries are enjoying near-boom conditions but manufacturing at best limped along in the second quarter of the year, according to new figures yesterday.

With services making up two-thirds of the economy, most analysts expect the Bank of England to announce an increase in interest rates tomorrow by a quarter of a percentage point to 7 per cent.

The prospect of another increase in the cost of borrowing combined with an assault on the German mark by the currency markets to take the pound to DM3.06 yesterday, its highest for more than seven

years. On the stock market, the FTSE100 index powered ahead by 64.9 points to 4,960.6.

Official figures yesterday showed that manufacturing output expanded by 0.4 per cent in June to a level just 1.2 per cent higher than a year earlier.

In the latest quarter there were increases in production of mineral products, transport equipment and electrical equipment but big falls in machinery, textiles and clothing and chemicals. Total manufacturing shrank by 0.1 per cent in the second quarter.

A regional breakdown by the Confederation of British Industry and Business Strategies showed that manufacturing output has boomed in East Anglia and Northern Ireland during the

past four months, and expanded in four other regions. But it fell sharply in Wales and declined slightly in four other areas.

Adding in a big rise in the energy sector helped take total industrial production up 1.4 per cent during the month, but only 0.4 per cent in the three months to June.

The prospect that growth in industry is crawling to a halt prompted warnings from some economists that the strong pound means no more interest rate increases are needed. "The Monetary Policy Committee needs to tread very carefully if it is to avoid tipping industry back into recession," said Jonathan Loyne at HSBC Markets.

However, other experts pointed to the evidence of rapid growth in services, confirmed by a survey from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply yesterday. This showed that the pace of growth slowed between June and July, but the index of activity remained, at 62.1, well above the 50 watershed between boom and recession. Expectations of a rise in interest rates boosted the pound yesterday. But sterling was also riding on the coat-tails of a decline in the mark against the dollar. Comments by Bundesbank officials, in a bid to stop the German currency falling too far too fast, were taken as a challenge by traders. "The Germans have used

verbal intervention, but the markets are now looking for action," said Nick Stamenkovic of DKB.

All eyes will be on the Bundesbank's decision whether or not to opt for a variable rather than a fixed interest rate when it announces the terms of next week's repurchase agreement, the means by which it acts in the money markets. For the first time it is hinting at the possibility of increases in German interest rates.

But most analysts think this is some way off. Alison Cottrell at Paine Webber said: "They will use all their verbal firepower first before turning to the interest rate blunderbuss. The German economy does not need higher rates."

London Clubs £192m bid for Capital blocked

Nigel Cope

London Clubs International, the casino group, found itself out of luck yesterday when its £192m bid for rival Capital Corporation was blocked by the Government.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, ruled that the takeover would be against the public interest as it would give London Clubs an 80 per cent share of the business in London's lucrative up-market casinos.

London Clubs already controls a string of these clubs including Les Ambassadeurs

and the Ritz club while Capital owns Crockfords and the Colony club.

London Clubs had launched its bid earlier this year but it had lapsed after the previous government referred it to the competition authorities. Regulatory clearance would have paved the way for a fresh bid.

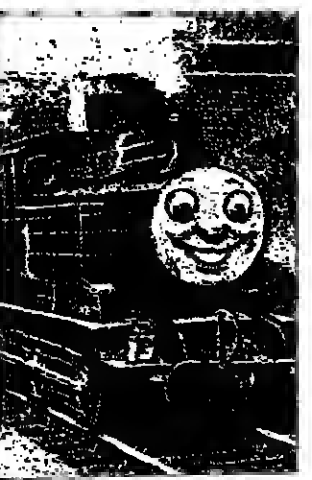
LCT's chief executive, Alan Goodenough, said the ruling was "disappointing" and based on "flawed logic". He argued that strict regulation made it impossible for a company to exploit its dominant position. The MMC report said that the deal would give the enlarged group

the opportunity to reduce the quality of services and increase prices while raising the barriers to entry.

Analysts said the decision would enable LCI to concentrate on its overseas expansion. It is set to open a casino in Las Vegas and is pitching for a licence for another in South Africa and at Niagara Falls.

The Government's decision was welcomed by Capital Corporation which has been rocked by a series of staff defections and boardroom clashes.

LCT shares closed 10p lower at 386.5p while Capital Corporation fell 19p to 165p.



Thomas the Tank: Fresh destinations with Pearson

Pearson on track to buy 'Thomas'

Andrew Yates

Pearson, the media-to-entertainment conglomerate, has emerged as the front runner to buy the children's book division of Reed, according to industry sources. The division is famous for publishing children's favourites such as Winnie the Pooh and Thomas the Tank Engine and Pearson is keen to marry the business with its Penguin books subsidiary.

It would be Pearson's first UK acquisition under Marjorie Scardino, the group's new chief

executive, who earlier this week vowed to double the size of the company within five years. The deal is likely to kickstart a period of frenetic corporate activity at Pearson. Ms Scardino is intent on launching an up-beat of the group, which encompasses the Financial Times, Madame Tussauds and investment bank Lazards.

Thomas the Tank Engine, famous for colourful characters such as the Fat Controller, was created more than 50 years ago by Reverend Awdry, who died earlier this year, for his son

Christopher. AA Milne's character Winnie the Pooh, which was inspired by a bear from London Zoo, and playmates Eeyore the donkey and Tigger have captivated children for ever longer.

Reed owns the UK publishing rights to Winnie the Pooh and Thomas but Disney and Britt Allcroft respectively own some of the international and merchandising rights. Michael Lynton, the new head of Penguin who used to work at Disney, is thought to be keen to work with these companies to

exploit the characters' commercial potential.

According to the sources, Pearson is the only bidder left in the running for Reed's business and is keen to tie up a deal by the end of the month. Publishing rival Dorling Kindersley is believed to have cast an eye over the business, but recently pulled out of the race. Analysts believe the business generates annual turnover of around £30m and could fetch up to £50m.

Pearson declined to comment.



From Methuen's current list: 'The House at Pooh Corner'

£3m for Amey Rail 'fat cats'

Andrew Yates

Five employees of Amey Railways, one of Railtrack's main contractors, yesterday emerged as the latest rail "fat cats".

The former British Rail employees stand to make a profit of more than £3m by selling their 25 per cent stake in Amey Railways just 16 months after the business was privatised, to Amey, the construction group that already owns the remaining shares in the business.

Peter Forbes, who led the management buyout of the stake in the rail business, will make more than £1m for the deal. The five employees paid around £250,000 for the quarter share of the business Amey is buying back for £3.48m.

The latest windfalls follow a long line of controversial British Rail management, the most notorious being the £30m bought by Sandy Anderson from the sale of Porterbrook train leasing group to Stagecoach.

Having secured his windfall, Mr Forbes has resigned as deputy chairman of Amey Railways and as a board director of Amey. He will receive no compensation for leaving his job but will remain as a consultant to

the group until the end of the end of 1999 on an undisclosed salary.

Neil Ashley, chairman of Amey, yesterday defended the windfalls. "This pay-off is much less than some other deals with leasing companies. The business is going well and we chose to exercise our option to buy back the minority stake."

Analysts believe that Amey has struck a bargain deal. The group and its management bought Amey Railways for just £15m in April last year and it made a profit of £5.4m in the nine months to last December.

Separately, however, Jarvis, another rail contractor, suffered a setback yesterday when its £64m rights issue to fund the acquisition of Fastline and Relatray, two track renewal companies, was spurned by investors. Less than 15 per cent of shareholders took up the rights, leaving underwriters with millions of unwanted shares.

Jarvis' share price has plummeted below the rights price of 255p since on negative comment in the City.

The shares slipped another 4p to 232p yesterday compared to the pre-rights price of 308.5p in June. A Jarvis spokesman said its problems had been exaggerated.

STOCK MARKETS

FTSE 100

Dow Jones*

Nikkei

Source: World Bank, Tokyo

*New Japan Index & graph at 1996 levels

Indices						
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	TDY(%)
FTSE 100	4960.60	+64.90	+1.3	4964.20	4056.80	3.32
FTSE 250	4496.60	+13.60	+0.3	4729.40	4386.20	3.69
FTSE 350	2973.40	+26.80	+1.1	2973.70	2017.90	3.39
FTSE SmallCap	2189.08	+0.42	+0.0	2374.20	2178.28	3.28
FTSE All-Share	2314.74	+24.34	+1.1	2316.03	1985.78	3.38
New York *	8194.97	-3.48	-0.0	8254.89	5025.54	3.68
Tokyo	19514.45	-163.62	-0.8	20651.07	17303.85	0.81
Hong Kong	16371.52	+111.93	+0.7	16379.22	12055.17	2.73
Frankfurt	4302.68	+5.74	+0.1	4438.93	2848.77	1.29

Source: FT Information

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond		Euro area		Japan	
1 Month	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year	1 Month	1 Year
UK	6.94	7.63	7.09	7.78	7.12	7.88			
US	5.88	5.84	6.22	6.49	6.49	6.75			
Japan	0.47	0.56	2.12	3.28					
Germany	3.06	3.50	5.71	6.29	6.38				

CURRENCIES

Four line charts showing currency trends for Pound, Dollar, Euro, and Yen. Each chart has a vertical axis for the index and a horizontal axis for months (J, F, M, A, M, J, J, A, S, O, N, D). The Pound chart shows a steady decline from 1.85 to 1.50. The Dollar chart shows a decline from 0.60 to 0.50. The Euro chart shows a decline from 1.90 to 1.70. The Yen chart shows a decline from 195 to 180.

Year-to-date exchange rates and 60-day fixed rate of £200 loans

Pound				Dollar			
	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago		Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£/\$	1.8274	-0.35%	1.5423	\$/£	0.6145	+0.13	0.8484
£/DM	1.8274	-0.35%	1.5423	DM/£	0.6145	+0.29	0.8484
£/¥	3.0577	-1.73%	2.7793	¥/£	1.6290	+1.51%	1.4779
£/Lombard	183,880	+1,053	184,841	¥/Lombard	118,120	+10,825	108,948
Index	105.7	+0.4	84.1	\$/Index	108.8	+1.5	95.8

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's High	Year Ago	Index	Yr Chg.	Yr Ago	Next Day
Brent \$	19.84	+0.17	19.83	RPI	157.5	+2.9%	183.0 12 Aug
Gold \$	319.75	-1.0	388.20	GDP	112.8	+3.4%	109.1 21 Aug
Oil \$	196.48	-2.08	292.08	Base Rates	6.75%	-	5.75 -

Sir Ronnie rides into town firing blanks

COMMENT

The committee started from the premise that good corporate governance is all about adopting broad principles and then applying them flexibly and with common sense to individual circumstances.

Over 140 written submissions and 200 discussions later it never really gets very much further

Mercury Asset Management has a simple but effective rule when it comes to voting on the board at the annual meeting and then, when its patience runs out, it sells all its shares. The effect is to concentrate executive minds wonderfully and in the way that a thousand Cudbury committees could never manage.

Perhaps Sir Ronnie Hampel had this form of summary justice in mind when his corporate governance handwagon rolled into town yesterday firing a mixture of blanks and bland truisms.

Sir Ronnie is correct that no amount of box-ticking can ever eradicate the lazy, unscrupulous or just plain bent. All of which makes endless lists of prescriptive rules something to comply with on paper and then promptly ignore in practice.

But he is even more accurate in his candid reflection that the Hampel Committee on Corporate Governance might never have been necessary.

Reading through the 40-odd pages of its preliminary report it is easy to see his point of view. Sir Richard Greenbury, who was the last man at the controls, advised Ronnie not to accept the job and he didn't let him down. For once the advance publicity was no exaggeration.

The committee started from the premise that good corporate governance is all about adopting broad principles and then applying them flexibly and with common sense to

individual circumstances. Over 140 written submissions and 200 discussions later it never really gets very much further. The list of 50 conclusions and recommendations boils down to the incontrovertible and uncontroversial conclusion that businesses are better run when equipped with informed, independent-minded and qualified directors, shareholders and auditors.

Small wonder that the plaudits flowed in thick and fast from a grateful business community confronted with nothing more exacting than the odd recommendation on the correct proportion of non-execs a board should sport and handy tips for good-housekeeping at the agm.

Of course, it is not just businessmen who will be relieved. The last thing New Labour wanted was a report that actually required it to legislate. Corporate profligacy was a perfect stick with which to beat the Tories while in opposition. In office it quickly becomes a minefield into which only the bomp-proof should venture. Remember what happened to Ken Clarke when he tried to scrap tax breaks on share options for Asda check out staff?

The lesson has not been lost on Labour. Suddenly it has a lot of better things to do than forcing companies to obtain shareholder approval for executive pay packages.

Sir Ronnie has wisely not left any hostages to fortune. Recommendation 51 does not appear in Sir Ronnie's report but what it says is that his committee should be the last

committee on corporate governance. That is one box everyone will tick.

No fairytale ending in sight for NatWest

If Rip Van Winkle had woken up yesterday to take a look at NatWest's interim results he might have been forgiven for asking what all the fuss was about. Profits of £775m, a 10 per cent rise in the dividend and a return on capital in its core high street bank that many companies would die for - it is not on the face of it a case study in crisis management.

Sadly NatWest is living not in a fairytale land but a nightmare, largely of the bank's own creation. Analysts left their meeting long-faced yesterday, the shares tumbled and those of its senior managers can only intensify. There are plainly operational problems, but most alarmingly there appears to have been a massive loss of collective nerve at the top which yesterday's ringing declaration of independence has done nothing to redress.

NatWest runs a highly profitable retail and commercial bank but one facing increasing competitive pressures from new entrants. Revenue increases will be hard to find. It also has an investment bank uncomfortably squeezed between the giant American full-service operations and the niche players at home. The costs of buying into the big time have been horrendous, the returns so far insignificant.

The investment banking division has shelled out £1bn in the past 18 months on acquisitions and seen its cost base rise from an annualised £800m to £1.2bn. In the first six months of the year its operating income rose by just £30m. That imbalance meant investment banking earned a paltry 2.4 per cent on the capital it employs - in the same period Lloyds TSB earned 40 per cent.

That is an unhappy state of affairs, but it is not the biggest problem facing NatWest. The gravest threat to the group's independence is its lack of confidence in its ability to remain so or its desire to stay that way. In that context, Derek Wansless and Lord Alexander were foolish in sitting down with Abbey National and the Pru. Knowing it was so firmly under the spotlight after dropping £90m on an arcane options contract and sacking its investment chief, it was naïve to believe those discussions would not leak.

Declarations of independence ring hollow when they only appear to have been made because there is no other offer on the table. If NatWest is to persuade the City it has set its true course, it may need other hands on the tiller.

GEC backs drugs tsar to inject some fizz

The markets have been kinder to John Mayo than George Simpson. When the new managing director of GEC produced his blueprint for change the share price

promptly fell. Yesterday it ticked up after GEC announced that the finance director of Zeneca has been brought on board to help execute the plan.

The youthful Mr Mayo (he is still only 42) has apparently been hired because of his reputation for corporate activity. This must refer to Mr Mayo's life before he became the drug company's finance director because, while he has presided over a positively mind-expanding rise in the share price, bids and deals have been thin on the ground over the last five years.

What Mr Mayo, then a corporate financier with Warburgs, did help engineer, however, was the demerger of ICI in 1993, after being drafted in to defend the group from the attentions of Lord Hanson.

He has presumably been brought on board to help GEC do the splits in the form of a separate listing for its jointly owned engineering business GEC Alsthom, provided the French agree to play ball and take the cash for their half of the business.

That will prove the easy bit in the grand scheme of things. The toughest nut to crack remains the task of finding partners for the defence electronics business GEC Marconi in a world rife with national chauvinism and monopoly complications. Mr Mayo has demonstrated his ability to cut a company in half but his real test will lie in growing Marconi in size. Even after yesterday's rise, the shares are still below their level before Mr Simpson's blueprint emerged.

GEC restructuring gains impetus as Mayo joins board

Michael Harrison

The restructuring of GEC took a big step forward yesterday after the defence electronics, telecoms and engineering group appointed one of the architects of the ICI demerger as its new finance director.

John Mayo, finance director with the pharmaceuticals giant, Zeneca, will join GEC on 1 October to work alongside managing director George Simpson on the overhaul of the group.

His appointment heightens expectations that GEC will push ahead with plans to demerge the power engineering and rail joint venture, Alcatel Alsthom, first unveiled last month.

But Mr Mayo, 42, is also expected to bring a new urgency to the disposal of GEC's unwanted businesses, such as the semiconductor division, while pressing ahead with the strategy of seeking partners for GEC Marconi in defence electronics.

Mr Mayo was a senior corporate financier with the investment bank SBC Warburg which defended ICI against Hanson. He went on to join the company, advising the ICI chairman, Sir Denis Henderson, on its demerger in 1992 before joining Zeneca, the demerged drugs arm.

Mr Simpson yesterday paid tribute to him as one of the



John Mayo: Likely to bring new urgency to disposal of unwanted businesses

country's best finance directors. "His experience and capabilities much fit the nature of the task at GEC. He is strong on corporate activity and that is exactly what we need if we are to make progress."

His appointment in place of David Newlands, who left as finance director last month, takes the boardroom overhaul of GEC a key stage further. It will be completed in the first quarter of next year when the group appoints a non-executive chairman to take over from Lord Prior, the former Conservative cabinet minister.

GEC has asked a well-known industrialist to take on the chairmanship but is bawling difficult negotiating terms for his departure from his existing

job. The City reacted warmly to the news of Mr Mayo's appointment, marking GEC's shares up 18.5p to 362.5p.

They fell sharply last month on the day that Mr Simpson announced his blueprint for the group on disappointment that he had not been able to unveil any firm deals.

Since then, however, GEC has agreed a tie-up with the defence electronics arm of Italy's Finmeccanica. It also intends to submit a bid later this month for Siemens Defence, reckoned to be worth around £300m. The other bidders are Thomson CSF and Alcatel of France, and a partnership between British Aerospace and Daimler Benz.

Alcatel Alsthom, which supplies the Channel Tunnel Eurostar trains, would be worth about £40m as a separately quoted company.

Mr Simpson said that discussions were progressing "more intensely" with Alcatel, which owns the other half of the business, and GEC remained confident that it could announce the outcome by mid-October.

GEC's preference is to demerge its 50 per cent interest in GEC Alsthom, leaving existing shareholders with shares in both GEC and the newly-quoted group.

People & Business, page 18

Stena Line ships out of Harwich port and nets £72m



Stena Line, the Swedish ferry operator, yesterday sold Harwich International Port (above) for £72m to a new company financed by HSBC Private Equity Investment Banking. Bo Lerenius, Stena

Line's managing director, said: "We have been offered an attractive price and are selling Harwich because our main business is shipping, not ports." Stena Line said it would use the port as a customer.

IN BRIEF

BA passenger numbers fall after strike

British Airways lost as much as 10 per cent of its passenger traffic as a result of the three day strike by cabin staff last month and its knock-on effects, including higher cabin crew sickness rates which lasted longer than expected. The number of passengers carried in July was 2.97 million, down 4.6 per cent on July 1997, although the totals for the first six months of the year had been 5.4 per cent up on the first half of last year. Flights inside the UK and to Europe were the worst affected, with numbers down 6 per cent on July 1996 at 1.94 million.

Chesterton warning sends shares diving

Chesterton International shares plunged from 57p to 53.5p after the property consultancy group warned that results for the year ended June 1997 would fall substantially below market expectations and may even end up in the red. A final dividend is unlikely. Michael Holmes, the newly appointed chief executive, said: "The out-turn for the year has been influenced by disappointing final-quarter trading in some areas relative to forecasts, certain one-off costs and the adoption of more prudent accounting policies."

UBS announces 67% surge in profits

Union Bank of Switzerland, the country's biggest bank, announced a 67 per cent surge in first half net profits to a record 1.86bn Swiss francs (£747m) despite flat trading profits and a 20 per cent rise in costs. UBS said it was keen to expand its asset management activities outside Switzerland, sparking speculation that it would move on a fund manager in London, where it already owns PDFM.

Cantab reports first ever profits

Cantab Pharmaceuticals reported its first ever pre-tax profit of £1.9m for the six months to end-June, compared with a loss of £3.69m. Jurek Sikorski, chief executive, said the group was in a strong position, with all programmes moving ahead, a sizeable cash balance and anticipated further growth and expansion following the establishment of a new facility to provide resources to build critical mass and enter the next stage in development.

Dai-ichi cuts directors' pay

Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank has decided to cut the remuneration of all 32 directors, including its president, Katsuyuki Sugita, with effect from last month. The move follows the imposition by the Ministry of Finance of penalties on the company for its involvement with *sokajya* racketeers. The *Nihon Keizai* newspaper evening edition in Tokyo reported that Mr Sugita's remuneration was to be cut by 60 per cent, with a 45 per cent cut for vice-president, Takasuke Kaneko.

Brixton to buy Kingsland Business Park

Brixton Estate has agreed to acquire the freehold of Kingsland Business Park, Basingstoke from Standard Life for £43m cash, excluding costs. The park is a 49-acre site, consisting of about 720,000 sq ft of industrial, warehouse and office space and seven acres of land available for immediate development. The estate adjoins Brixton's 113,000 sq ft Gastons Wood Estate. Following this acquisition, Brixton's UK industrial portfolio increases to over £490m, representing 60 per cent of its total UK portfolio. Kingsland generates a rental income of £3.4m a year, reflecting an initial yield on the let investment properties of 8.5 per cent.

T&N sells Tennat for £18m

T&N has sold its Tennat high performance engineering composites and ceramics businesses for £18.1m cash, dependent upon asset valuation at completion, to a management team led by Toby Moore, managing director of Tennat. The proceeds will go into a fund for future asbestos-related disease claims. In 1996 Tennat made a pre-tax profit of £3.2m on sales of £18.5m. Pre-tax profit on the sale is expected to be £5m after goodwill of £2.4m and expenses.

Derby County raises £10m

Derby County, owner of the Premier League football club, has raised £10m from *Electra Fleming* as a step towards a stock market listing within the next three years. The funding consists of £5m of preference shares and £5m of ordinary shares for a 25 per cent stake.

BAA sets up £102m windfall provision

Chris Godsmark

BAA, owner of Heathrow and Gatwick airports, yesterday became one of the first privatised companies to make provisions to pay the Government's windfall tax, setting aside £102m in its first quarter results.

The company said the provision was its final estimate of the tax liability, which had yet to be calculated by the Inland Revenue. Other privatised groups have also pledged to set aside their windfall tax liability as a single provision, despite the Treasury's decision to allow them to pay in two instalments. British Telecom has already said it will set aside the £500m windfall tax cost in its next set of quarterly results.

The provision almost wiped out BAA's pre-tax profits between April and June, which rose by 4.5 per cent to £136m. The results are the first since the company agreed a new price formula with the regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority, which cut charges at its three London airports, Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted by £2.5m a year.

BAA said underlying earnings had grown by 13.1 per cent, after taking into account the £8m cost of a scheme which reduces the daily variable in airport charges during heavy demand. The company's move to stop capitalising interest on investment projects through its balance sheet had cost a further £3m.

BP fans strike it rich with share buy-back

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

British Petroleum yesterday announced long-awaited share buy-back plans and a much stronger-than-expected 21 per cent rise in half-yearly profits.

The news, coupled with confirmation that BP had yet again beaten its internal efficiency targets, pushed the company's shares up 39.5p to a 12-month peak of 862.5p. Its market value soared by more than £2bn to £49bn.

The buy-backs are expected to take place in stages after the company seeks approval for the move at its next annual

meeting in May. BP declined to speculate on the value of the buy-backs, though analysts suggested they could top £1bn in the first year.

BP said it would also buy back a further £300m worth of shares ahead of the agm, for use in its employee share ownership schemes. Previously such schemes have involved issuing new shares.

Though directors had been considering buy-backs since 1995, BP's hand was forced by the removal of tax credits in last month's Budget. The group said the take-up of dividends paid in the form of shares had doubled since the announce-

ment, because these were paid in gross form to all shareholders. The demand for share dividends threatened to double the number of new shares issued each year to 2 per cent.

At the same time yesterday's results showed a further £1.3bn (£799m) reduction in BP's debts to £6.1bn, well below the company's target of between \$7bn and \$8bn. Debts, which are mainly dollar denominated, have fallen progressively from more than \$15bn in 1992, when the company faced serious financial problems.

John Browne, chief executive, coupled the buy-back announcement with BP's first

public attack on other Budget tax changes, which hit companies that earn substantial profits abroad. He said the uncertainty left by the removal of foreign income dividends was "regrettable because it threatens to make Britain less attractive as a place in which to do business."

Mr Browne said that he welcomed the Treasury's commitment to look again at the legislation in next spring's Budget, to ensure companies like BP would not be disadvantaged.

Profits before exceptional items on a replacement cost basis rose by 21 per cent in the first six months of the year, to

£2,437bn. The rise in sterling terms was a more modest 17 per cent, reflecting the strength of the UK currency, to £1,495bn. BP increased its dividend by 0.25p to 5.5p for the second quarter of the year, taking the half-yearly payout to 10.75p a share.

Exploration and production profits rose from £1,49bn to £1,6bn, despite a drop in average oil prices during the first half of the year by \$1 a barrel, to \$19 a barrel. Refining and marketing businesses also turned in a strong performance with profits of £486m, up from £365m the previous year.

Investment column, page 18

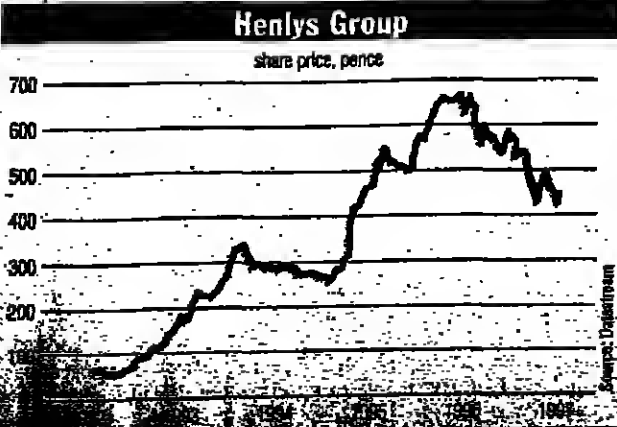
Henlys sells motor dealerships for £57m

Andrew Yates

Henlys, the bus and coach maker, yesterday signalled a big shift in strategy by selling its motor dealerships for £56.6m, twice the amount that the rival Cowie group offered for the entire company five years ago. The news was greeted enthusiastically by investors, and Henlys' shares jumped 25p to 441p, valuing the group at £235m.

Meanwhile, as Henlys exited from the business, the Hull-based Dixon Motors announced the £13.4m acquisition of Camell, a car dealer and one of the UK's largest motorcycle retailers. Both moves illustrate the extensive shake-up among car dealers at the moment.

Robert Wood, Henlys' chief executive, said yesterday: "We were at a crossroads. Car dealership is a low-margin business and



we were not making anything like the return from the bus and coach business. We listened to our shareholders and decided to withdraw from the sector."

When Cowie launched its hostile bid, motor dealerships produced the bulk of Henlys'

earnings. But last year it accounted for only a fifth of profits and its growth rate has fallen way behind the bus division. Henlys has cashed in on the surge in orders for new buses from the likes of Stagecoach, First Bus - and Cowie.

Henlys will spend the proceeds from the deal on bus and coach acquisitions in the Far East and North America. "We supply over 40 per cent of the buses in the UK so we are looking overseas. We could have more than £100m to spend," Mr Wood said yesterday.

Henlys has sold the division to a management buy-in team backed by Legal & General Ventures, the venture capitalists, which is considering floating the business within four years.

The upheaval in the motor industry has been caused by pressure from manufacturers on car traders to form regional dealerships. This has caused a consolidation of the industry which has seen the emergence of fewer, larger dealers.

Dixon plans to fund its expansion by raising £17.6m via a one-for-three rights issue.

Sears Financial Services Limited

Notice of change of interest rate

With effect from 6th September 1997, the rate of interest on Selfridges SearsCard accounts will be:

Paying by all methods
2.05% per month - 27.6 APR (variable)



Sears Financial Services Limited, Radcliffe House, Blenheim Court, Solihull B91 2AA. Tel: 0990 910 000

BP still on course to exceed targets

Lord Simon, BP's erstwhile chairman, is now making bigger waves in the Westminster snake-pit than at the oil group he used to chair, but his legacy lives on in the group's low of metaphor to embellish its results presentations. For Simon it was football and cricket, but yesterday John Browne, the urbanite chief executive, tried his hand less successfully at gardening. The question he was trying to illustrate, as so often with BP, was how low the company could outperform even the most bullish analysts' expectations.

The market was in no doubt yesterday, responding to the group's interim results with a 39.5p surge in the share price to 861.5p.

On the two clearest measures of "self help", BP's management mantra used to describe efficiency savings, the group has done well, yet again. The target this year is to cut \$300m (£184m) of costs from the business, an improvement BP almost achieved in the first half alone. The target has now been raised to more than \$500m, a figure the company will no doubt comfortably exceed.

The other measure is BP's return on capital, which rose in the first half to 19 per cent, way ahead of even the most efficient rivals. Last year BP was pondering whether its increase in returns to 16 per cent was sustainable, while Shell, which reports results tomorrow, has struggled to better 12 per cent.

Aside from the elements BP can control, the notoriously uncertain global oil market continues to work largely in the group's favour. Though oil prices have fallen somewhat from last year's peak of almost \$25 a barrel, they have not dropped back as far as expected.

Much still depends on whether Iraqi oil will hit world markets, shifting the supply and demand equation. Yet as Mr Browne pointed out, world demand for oil is up 4 per cent, encouraging investment in new fields.

To this rosy picture investors can add a new ingredient in the shape of BP's commitment to share buy-backs. With debts of little more than \$6bn against targets of \$7bn-\$8bn, BP will next year buy back between \$500m and \$2bn of shares, according to analysts. In the meantime, the group has unveiled a "taster" in the form of a \$500m purchase of existing shares to use for employee share schemes. With sensible debt management, BP can justifiably continue a cautious approach to acquisitions.

Despite intensifying competition, there is no reason to disbelieve BP's continually reinforced drive to beat its own targets, implying plenty of upside in the share price.

Investors should expect BP's full-year profits to rise from £2.6bn to more than £2.9bn, as efficiency savings continue

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

British Petroleum: At a glance

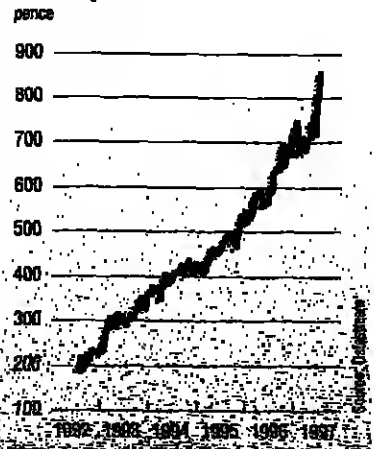
Market value: \$49.0bn, share price 861.5p +39.5p

Trading record	1994	1995	1996	1996	1997
		Full year		Half year	
Turnover (£bn)	33.1	36.1	44.7	20.7	22.8
Net profits (£bn)	1.58	1.12	2.56	1.34	1.17
Earnings per share (pence)	28.8	20.2	45.5	23.8	20.5
Dividends per share (pence)	10.5	15.25	19.5	9.25	10.75

Replacement cost operating profit (£m)



Share price



to beat expectations, and the full-year dividend to go from 19.5p to around 22.5p.

Even on a forward price-earnings ratio in the high teens, the shares are still a buy.

Smiths bids for Graseby

Keith Butler-Wheelhouse yesterday marked his arrival at the helm of Smiths Industries with the group's first bid for a quoted company for as long as anyone can remember. But while the agreed £136m offer for Graseby may break new ground, it is very much in the Smiths' mould. Graseby's medical to defence equipment businesses should neatly bolt on to existing businesses in a similar fashion to most of the more than £500m of acquisitions Smiths has made over the past five years.

It is also unlikely to be the last or the most spectacular move to be made by Mr Butler-Wheelhouse, who took over as chief executive from Sir Roger Hurn in November. Smiths has already

indicated it has up to £400m to spend on acquisitions and is ready to approach shareholders if it needs more. A £1bn bid for BOC's Ohmeda medical gases and disposable products business, recently put up for sale, could still be in the offing.

That is not to belittle yesterday's deal, brokered by Robert Fleming, the City merchant bank. Even at 21p a share, a 41 per cent premium to Graseby's pre-bid price, the deal should be earnings enhancing. The benefits may be eroded by sterling's strength, with 60 per cent of Graseby's sales coming from overseas, but the medical fit looks very good. The company's medical pumps tend to be used in hospitals, while Smiths' are used outside. Equally, Graseby will give Smiths' Deltec operation access to markets outside the US. Meanwhile, the higher company's "first-tier" supplier status with the US Department of Defense will provide heavyweight backing to Graseby's chunky \$77m (£47m) contract to supply chemical attack monitoring equipment to the US military.

Interim results from Graseby showing underlying pre-tax profits up 11 per cent to £5.2m suggest that things are going in the right direction. The bid will

be a bitter pill for John Hawkins, who only arrived as chief executive in May, but having seen the share price go nowhere for the past five years, shareholders would be well advised to follow the holders of 27 per cent of the shares who have already backed the offer. However, Smiths, up 9p at 804.5p, looks high enough on a forward p/e above 19, assuming profits of £185 to £190m in the year just ended.

Mayflower finds fast-track growth

Car parts makers are generally having a tough time at the moment, with manufacturers putting a squeeze on margins in an attempt to cut costs. But Mayflower is a component manufacturer with a difference. It has carved out a lucrative niche developing and designing car bodies and its profits are blossoming. Manufacturers are looking to sell an ever more diverse range of cars of different designs and styles to attract customers. To do so they are outsourcing more work to suppliers such as Mayflower who have the flexibility and expertise to create these new models.

Mayflower's pre-tax profits for the six months to June rose 58 per cent to £16.1m, mostly thanks to a maiden contribution from last year's US acquisition SCAM. That said, underlying operating profits still rose an impressive 22 per cent.

Within that, European profits rose by nearly a fifth to £6.9m, despite a temporary dip in sales. US profits jumped from £2.2m to £7.7m and the expected surge in sales of a new Mercedes-Benz M-Class sports car should help earnings further this year.

It also has a wealth of other new orders in the pipeline. It has recently won contracts with Ford and a Brazilian truck manufacturer to produce new truck bodies. And more acquisitions are on the cards. Analysts believe Mayflower's gearing will fall swiftly over the next few years and it could afford a sizeable acquisition, probably within the aerospace industry. Mayflower has recently moved into this area, teaming up with British Aerospace to help design the Nimrod and the new Eurofighter.

Prospects also look rosy at its manufacturing subsidiary, Walter Alexander. Profits there rose by 48 per cent to £3.7m. It is expanding rapidly in the Far East and has won a contract in Sweden to provide new buses for Stagecoach.

House broker BZW forecasts current year profits of £34m, putting the shares, up 3.5p at 158p, on a prospective p/e ratio of 15. Mayflower's shares have moved upwards in the last few years, rising from just 22p in 1993, but they should remain in the fast lane for some time yet. Good value.

Candidates line up in the Abbey succession stakes

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Peter Birch, Abbey's outgoing chief executive, is proving a hard act to follow

Who will succeed Peter Birch as chief executive of the Abbey National? Mr Birch, who joined the old Abbey National Building Society in 1984, will declare his retirement at Abbey's next AGM in April 1998, when he reaches the company's retirement age of 60.

Insiders at Abbey's head office in Baker Street, London, expect his successor to be announced before the end of the year. I hear that the internal runners and riders are Ian Harley, Tim Ingram and Andrew Pople.

Ian Harley, 46, is currently Abbey's finance director and appears to be favourite at Baker Street. One insider says: "He's got a typically Scottish sense of humour, very dry. The City knows him well."

Banking analysts are not so keen. One tells me: "He won't go down a storm in Abbey's branch network, he lacks flamboyance. That's one reason why finance directors very rarely make it to top slot in banks. But he is a safe pair of hands."

Tim Ingram, 49, is managing director of Abbey's European operations and also heads up the First National Finance Corporation (FNFC) consumer finance division. Mr Ingram is, if anything, a bit too flamboyant, according to the same analyst. "FNFC is a pretty sporty lender, he wouldn't fit the conservative image that Abbey is still trying to project."

Then there's Andrew Pople, 40, a youthful, William Hague-like candidate and corporate planner who's come up through the branches.

Mr Pople used to head up Scottish Mutual, an insurance company Abbey bought in 1992. This then formed the core of what became Abbey National Life, based in Glasgow, which Mr Pople helped nurse into life. He is also a former area director.

My analyst muses: "He's a solid candidate, but again it's unusual for an insurance man to make it to the top in a retail bank. There again, the bancassurance ticket might win it for him."

And, if none of the trio is acceptable to the board, they can always go outside the Abbey, like Barclays Bank did with Martin Taylor.

Lord Tugendhat, Abbey's chairman, will be there a while longer. Although he's 60 as well, Abbey's retirement age for non-executive chairmen is 70.

If you work in the Square Mile, now is your chance to bring out your loganberries, produce your peas and flourish your gladioli. The 1997 City of London Flower Show is upon us on the 9 and 10 of September at the Guildhall. Anyone wishing to exhibit should contact the Show Secretary on 0181-472 3584.

There are loads of categories of home-grown produce including fruit, vegetables, flowers, food, honey, wine and beer.

Be warned: competition for the prizes is vicious. And as the brochure warns: "No exhibit may be tasted or in any way interfered with (other than by the judges)."

The fact that GEC has poached Zeneca's finance director John Mayo to be its own numbers man may have a simple explanation: Zeneca's head office off London's Park Lane at 15 Stanhope Gate directly overlooks GEC's own headquarters at 1 Stanhope Gate.

George Simpson, GEC's chief executive,

could have waited outside his front door and button-holed Mr Mayo, waving a fistful of fivers. Sir David Barnes, Zeneca's chief executive, admits that "we each see the other lot coming and going - but there's no more interaction than that". Perhaps Sir David is being naïve.

Mr Mayo, a 41-year-old corporate finance whizz, certainly isn't moving to improve his working surroundings. Zeneca's head office is a recently refurbished Victorian palace of a building, all pillars and porticos, while the GEC Lufthansa across the way looks like a drab concrete shoe box from one of the less scenic parts of the West Midlands.

City punters are keen to see Mr Mayo put his well-known dealmaking skills to use dismantling Arnold Weinstock's sclerotic empire, which includes over 400 subsidiaries. Mr Mayo originally trained as an accountant and honed his corporate finance skills at SG Warburg, before it was swallowed by SEB.

Warburg insiders recall there were two John Mayos at the bank in the 1980s. In order to avoid confusion they had to refer to "Old Mr Mayo", who was head of compliance and a distinguished former senior partner of City law firm Freshfields; and "Young Mr Mayo", the Young Turk in corporate finance.

Mayo junior had several good corporate clients at that time, including Pentland, which he helped steer through its lucrative ownership of Reebok, the trainers manufacturer.

Sir David Scholey, then head of Warburg, seconded Mr Mayo in October 1990 to ICI and following the split he was invited to stay on at Zeneca as their beancounter in chief.

Sir David says he enjoyed working with Mr Mayo. "The intellectual challenge at GEC just across the street had an irresistible magnetic pull for him."

John Willcock

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Intel Chipset Motherboard

Advanced Intel 430 Chipset with 512K pipeline burst cache provides the ideal performance platform. A 166MHz version of this system was the fastest 166MHz ever tested by PC Direct Magazine (August issue pages 99-100).

Willis Corroon joins Abbey in IFA venture

Magnus Grimond

Willis Corroon, the insurance broking group, and Abbey National yesterday announced the creation of what is expected to be the UK's second-biggest group of independent financial advisers. The new joint venture, to be called Willis National, will have a salesforce of around 200, somewhat less than the biggest IFA group operated by the Bradford & Bingley Building Society.

The deal is partly a response to growing frustration that Abbey's existing network has been unable to mark out its independence clearly from its parent company, which itself sells Abbey National and Scottish Mutual products through tied agents within the 875-strong chain of branches. Willis National will be 51 per cent owned by Willis Corroon, further distancing the new venture from Abbey.

Charles Toner, chairman of Abbey National Independent Financial Advisers, said: "The

Willis National name will provide a clear distinction between Abbey National's IFA activities and other services available through Abbey National."

However, the two businesses are also seen as complementing each other, with ANIFA having carved a niche offering advice to wealthy people with complicated financial requirements such as retirement planning, phased retirement and income draw down. This is an area which the IFA network built by Willis has found difficult to break into, having grown a corporate business concentrating on small businesses and partnerships without the benefit of an established high street name.

George Nixon, head of UK retail operations at Willis, said he believed the IFA business had tremendous growth prospects and the new company would be in a strong position to gain market share. Willis Corroon Financial Planning had revenues of £10.3m last year, while ANIFA recorded sales of £13.7m.

ABI Leisure warns of sterling impact

Clifford German

Shares in ABI Leisure fell heavily yesterday after the Yorkshire-based caravan maker added its name to the growing list of companies warning about the effects of the strong pound.

George Shields, chairman, said profits in the current year would be less than market expectations but not lower than around £4.5m, which compares with the £5.04m made in 1996. The dividend is likely to be maintained at last year's level.

Analysts had been expecting a continuation of the upward profit trend to £5.4m this year and £5.8m in 1998. Reaction to the warning saw the shares dive 18p to 60p.

UK business has been maintained, and sales of static caravans

in particular have benefited from buyers spending windfall bonuses. But 45 per cent of annual sales go to western Europe, especially France, Germany and the Netherlands, compared with just 20 per cent five years ago.

Sales were still improving and the company was reluctant to sacrifice its market share, said David Carrick, chief executive. Prices in foreign currencies have been maintained and receipts in sterling had fallen sharply.

The company has been concerned about the strong pound for some time, but until May the impact was partially offset by forward trading in the foreign exchange markets and sourcing more raw materials and components overseas.

Company Results	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
AAA (21)	367m (347m)	136m (130m)	0.2p (0.3p)	- (-)
Canal Pharmaceuticals (1)	- (-)	1.97m (3.71m)	0.12p (0.34p)	- (-)
Cheltenham Group (1)	15.3m (6.3m)	0.66m (0.21m)	5.23p (2.43p)	1.4p (1p)
Enterprise (1)	9.50m (9.36m)	-0.74m (1.36m)	-6.2p (5.3p)	1.5p (1.5p)
Homegroup Props (1)	- (-)	5.4m (2.3m)	1.5p (1.05p)	0.18p (0.165p)
Imperial Group (1)	196m (119m)	34.7m (15.7m)	11.62p (9.91p)	2.25p (2.1p)
Mayflower Corp (1)	193m (141m)	16.1m (10.2m)	4.84p (3.25p)	0.92p (0.75p)
William Heath (1)	4.63m (4.59m)	1.66m (1.52m)	13.79p (12.67p)	2.7p (2.6p)
Wal-Mart (1)	- (-)	775m (692m)	28.5p (6.3p)	10.5p (9.6p)
Willis Corroon (1)	- (-)	60.2m (70.6m)	8p (10.7p)	3.3p (3.3p)

(1) - First (1) - Interim (21) - First quarter

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MARKET REPORT

CATHY NEWMAN



has not been asked for in recent months was also feeling loved. It added 14p to 242.5p, encouraged by an upgrade from Merrill Lynch.

Pharmaceuticals see-sawed again after looking poorly on Monday.

The sector experienced a modest resurgence, led by Glaxo Wellcome, which jumped 24.5p to £13.26 after Novopharm secured a deal to supply Glaxo's Zantac ulcer drug to the US market. Zeneqa followed suit, despite losing its finance director to GEC. The company leapt 39p to £20.42. Cantlab Pharmaceuticals also improved, up 5p to 867.5p on good interim results.

drug to the US market. Zeneca followed suit, despite losing its finance director to GEC. The company leapt 39p to £20.42. **Cantab Pharmaceuticals** also improved, up 5p to 687.5p on good interim results.

good interim results.

pointing interim results failed to check the market's overall rise, but stopped the bank entering the financial sector's equivalent of the Ivy League. The shares shed 35p to 835p.

NatWest was deluged by negative brokers' notes from Kleinwort Benson, Schroders and Merrill Lynch among others. And the bank's attempts to pour cold water on its problems did nothing to help the share price. The usual suspects joined NatWest's decline, with **Barclays**, which reports results tomorrow, losing 9p to £12.78, despite "accumulate" advice from Merrill Lynch.

Other financials could do no wrong though, with HSBC - which reported excellent results earlier in the week - lapping up extremely positive noises from just about every analyst in town. HSBC rose 13p to a record £72.51.

Pearson continued its renaissance after Monday's bel-

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2007	Low	Stalk	Price	Chg	Red	Inch	Index
Index-linked							
14 1/4	10 1/2	2 1/4	14 1/4	-	2.55	1733	
15 1/4	11 1/4	2 1/4	15 1/4	-	3.72	1335	
16 1/4	12 1/4	2 1/4	16 1/4	-	3.57	1317	
17 1/4	13 1/4	2 1/4	17 1/4	-	3.67	1295	
18 1/4	14 1/4	2 1/4	18 1/4	-	3.61	1194	
19 1/4	15 1/4	2 1/4	19 1/4	-	3.53	1030	
20 1/4	16 1/4	2 1/4	20 1/4	-	3.57	1000	
21 1/4	17 1/4	2 1/4	21 1/4	-	3.55	1027	
22 1/4	18 1/4	2 1/4	22 1/4	-	3.57	1002	
23 1/4	19 1/4	2 1/4	23 1/4	-	3.57	1004	
Unstaked							
5 1/4	4 1/4	1 1/4	5 1/4	-	1	1030	

LAST									
High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Real	Index	Code		
100 1/2	42 3/4	Wor 10 1/2	40 1/2	- 1/2	-	1252			
67 1/2	30 1/2	Consol 3 1/2	40 1/2	- 1/2	-	1253			
41 1/2	30 1/2	7 3/4	40 1/2	- 3/4	-	1254			
68 1/4	34	Consol 2 1/2	39 1/2	- 1/2	-	1255			
26 1/2	30 1/2	7 1/2 1/2	39 1/2	- 1/2	-	1256			

Shorts

100 1/2	42 3/4	Wor 10 1/2	40 1/2	- 1/2	-	1252	
67 1/2	30 1/2	Consol 3 1/2	40 1/2	- 1/2	-	1253	
41 1/2	30 1/2	7 3/4	40 1/2	- 3/4	-	1254	
68 1/4	34	Consol 2 1/2	39 1/2	- 1/2	-	1255	
26 1/2	30 1/2	7 1/2 1/2	39 1/2	- 1/2	-	1256	

1987				Ref	Yr
High	Low	Steady	Price Chg	Index	Code
100% 125%	100	100	100%	729	0000
75% 100%	100	100	100%	730	0000
Mediums					
100% 100%	100	100	100%	731	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	732	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	733	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	734	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	735	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	736	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	737	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	738	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	739	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	740	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	741	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	742	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	743	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	744	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	745	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	746	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	747	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	748	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	749	0000
100% 100%	100	100	100%	750	0000

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Puett's genius has enduring impact

Starting stalls are such a familiar part of the racing landscape that it is only when they fail - before the Golden Mile at Goodwood last week, for instance - that anyone notices they are there. Day after day, on snapping open, the gates kick off and running.

No one now could imagine a return to the days of ragged standing starts, when one official was said to stand in the front, non-triers behind. Yet, when the first electric starting gate was demonstrated at a meeting in British Columbia, Canada, in

July 1939, it met with scepticism, since few of the spectators believed that a dozen or so horses could be housed so safely and efficiently. And if that seems remarkable enough, consider also the fact that the man who invented the starting stall is still around to recount the tale.

Clay Puett will be 86 next month, but he continues to oversee the True Centre Gate Leasing Company in Phoenix, Arizona, which he founded in 1941. As with so many clever inventions, the stall was born out of failure and frustration. In Puett's case, the result of being asked to act as a starter at a track in Col-

orado. "I was a complete failure," he says, "and I wasn't used to that. I just couldn't get them away in any kind of a time. There would let them out when I wanted them out."

It took Puett a decade to come up with the design which, while it has changed in several minor details, is still the basis of stalls throughout the world today. "Nobody's ever made one better than ours," he says. "People didn't think you could lock up a thoroughbred. However, I thought different. Horses are a lot like people, if you treat them with kindness, you'll get along."

He was right, as the first tri-

al at a course in Vancouver on 1 July 1939 was to prove, and scepticism swiftly turned to unbridled enthusiasm. "It took me by surprise," Puett says.

"By the end of 1940, they were being used at every major track in the United States, first at Bay Meadows in California, then at Santa Anita, Belmont and so on."

It remains a thriving business. Puett still spends part of each day supervising repairs in the company workshop, and in the last year alone, the firm has exported stalls to places as far away as Puerto Rico, Peru and Thailand. Many others are

leased to domestic tracks and training centres, which allows their inventor to take a hand in their upkeep.

"People don't maintain them," Puett says. "It's like your automobile, if you don't take care of it, it won't take care of you, so I rent them and I service them."

Almost 60 years after his idea started to transform racing worldwide, Clay Puett is still regularly making improvements to the design. "I'm building a new 12-stall gate for a race track in Tucson," he says. "I reckon that might be the last one I'll build."

Few would care to bet on it.

Bastiman suffers record punishment Three-day ban for Hind

Most people's idea of a steep learning curve is a steep learning curve, but the lessons Harvey Bastiman had to absorb yesterday. The apprentice created an unwanted record at Catterick when he was given suspensions totalling 10 days for his riding in one race.

Bastiman, 22, was stood down for 10 days for reckless riding after the well-backed

Mybette had finished first, just the way in the 'Doncaster Town Moor' Handicap, but the stewards also took exception to his use of the whip and added a further suspension of six days. Bastiman's spell out of the saddle runs from 14 to 23 August, and then from 25 to 30 August.

To complete a miserable day for the Bastimans the jockey's fir-

ther Robin, the trainer of Mybette, was fined £200 for failing to inform the stewards of the reasons for Mybette's poor performance on his previous outing. According to Jockey Club records no jockey has been given such a severe penalty by racecourse stewards for his riding in one race. "The highest a rider can get for one offence from

local stewards is 14 days, but in this case it's the double whammy," a Jockey Club spokesman, John Masse, said. "As far as we can recall there has never been a ban as high as this handed out by the stewards at a racecourse."

"Of course, a ban could be much higher if the offence was serious enough to be referred to Purinton Square."

Gary Hind was furious yesterday after being handed a three-day ban under the 'non-triers' rule at Folkestone. Hind called it "a poor decision", after being stood down for 14 to 16 August following his ride on John Gordon's Literary, which was beaten six and a half lengths into fifth behind Country Thatch in last race. He described Literary as a stubborn filly

that he was trying to relax, but the stewards felt he could have brought her home in third place. The incident overshadowed a fine piece of training by Con Horgan with Country Thatch, who 12 months ago underwent an operation for a soft palate. Horgan said: "He had a terrible wind problem and made a hell of a noise. It's taken a long time to get his confidence back."

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GOING: Good to Firm.
STALLS: 1-4, 10-12, 14-16, 18-20, 22-24, 26-28, 30-32, 34-36, 38-40, 42-44, 46-48, 50-52, 54-56, 58-60, 62-64, 66-68, 70-72, 74-76, 78-80, 82-84, 86-88, 90-92, 94-96, 98-100, 102-104, 106-108, 110-112, 114-116, 118-120, 122-124, 126-128, 130-132, 134-136, 138-140, 142-144, 146-148, 150-152, 154-156, 158-160, 162-164, 166-168, 170-172, 174-176, 178-180, 182-184, 186-188, 190-192, 194-196, 198-200, 202-204, 206-208, 210-212, 214-216, 218-220, 222-224, 226-228, 230-232, 234-236, 238-240, 242-244, 246-248, 250-252, 254-256, 258-260, 262-264, 266-268, 270-272, 274-276, 278-280, 282-284, 286-288, 290-292, 294-296, 298-300, 302-304, 306-308, 310-312, 314-316, 318-320, 322-324, 326-328, 330-332, 334-336, 338-340, 342-344, 346-348, 350-352, 354-356, 358-360, 362-364, 366-368, 370-372, 374-376, 378-380, 382-384, 386-388, 390-392, 394-396, 398-400, 402-404, 406-408, 410-412, 414-416, 418-420, 422-424, 426-428, 430-432, 434-436, 438-440, 442-444, 446-448, 450-452, 454-456, 458-460, 462-464, 466-468, 470-472, 474-476, 478-480, 482-484, 486-488, 490-492, 494-496, 498-500, 502-504, 506-508, 510-512, 514-516, 518-520, 522-524, 526-528, 530-532, 534-536, 538-540, 542-544, 546-548, 550-552, 554-556, 558-560, 562-564, 566-568, 570-572, 574-576, 578-580, 582-584, 586-588, 590-592, 594-596, 598-600, 602-604, 606-608, 610-612, 614-616, 618-620, 622-624, 626-628, 630-632, 634-636, 638-640, 642-644, 646-648, 650-652, 654-656, 658-660, 662-664, 666-668, 670-672, 674-676, 678-680, 682-684, 686-688, 690-692, 694-696, 698-700, 702-704, 706-708, 710-712, 714-716, 718-720, 722-724, 726-728, 730-732, 734-736, 738-740, 742-744, 746-748, 750-752, 754-756, 758-760, 762-764, 766-768, 770-772, 774-776, 778-780, 782-784, 786-788, 790-792, 794-796, 798-800, 802-804, 806-808, 810-812, 814-816, 818-820, 822-824, 826-828, 830-832, 834-836, 838-840, 842-844, 846-848, 850-852, 854-856, 858-860, 862-864, 866-868, 870-872, 874-876, 878-880, 882-884, 886-888, 890-892, 894-896, 898-900, 902-904, 906-908, 910-912, 914-916, 918-920, 922-924, 926-928, 930-932, 934-936, 938-940, 942-944, 946-948, 950-952, 954-956, 958-960, 962-964, 966-968, 970-972, 974-976, 978-980, 982-984, 986-988, 990-992, 994-996, 998-1000, 1002-1004, 1006-1008, 1010-1012, 1014-1016, 1018-1020, 1022-1024, 1026-1028, 1030-1032, 1034-1036, 1038-1040, 1042-1044, 1046-1048, 1050-1052, 1054-1056, 1058-1060, 1062-1064, 1066-1068, 1070-1072, 1074-1076, 1078-1080, 1082-1084, 1086-1088, 1090-1092, 1094-1096, 1098-1100, 1102-1104, 1106-1108, 1110-1112, 1114-1116, 1118-1120, 1122-1124, 1126-1128, 1130-1132, 1134-1136, 1138-1140, 1142-1144, 1146-1148, 1150-1152, 1154-1156, 1158-1160, 1162-1164, 1166-1168, 1170-1172, 1174-1176, 1178-1180, 1182-1184, 1186-1188, 1190-1192, 1194-1196, 1198-1200, 1202-1204, 1206-1208, 1210-1212, 1214-1216, 1218-1220, 1222-1224, 1226-1228, 1230-1232, 1234-1236, 1238-1240, 1242-1244, 1246-1248, 1250-1252, 1254-1256, 1258-1260, 1262-1264, 1266-1268, 1270-1272, 1274-1276, 1278-1280, 1282-1284, 1286-1288, 1290-1292, 1294-1296, 1298-1300, 1302-1304, 1306-1308, 1310-1312, 1314-1316, 1318-1320, 1322-1324, 1326-1328, 1330-1332, 1334-1336, 1338-1340, 1342-1344, 1346-1348, 1350-1352, 1354-1356, 1358-1360, 1362-1364, 1366-1368, 1370-1372, 1374-1376, 1378-1380, 1382-1384, 1386-1388, 1390-1392, 1394-1396, 1398-1400, 1402-1404, 1406-1408, 1410-1412, 1414-1416, 1418-1420, 1422-1424, 1426-1428, 1430-1432, 1434-1436, 1438-1440, 1442-1444, 1446-1448, 1450-1452, 1454-1456, 1458-1460, 1462-1464, 1466-1468, 1470-1472, 1474-1476, 1478-1480, 1482-1484, 1486-1488, 1490-1492, 1494-1496, 1498-1500, 1502-1504, 1506-1508, 1510-1512, 1514-1516, 1518-1520, 1522-1524, 1526-1528, 1530-1532, 1534-1536, 1538-1540, 1542-1544, 1546-1548, 1550-1552, 1554-1556, 1558-1560, 1562-1564, 1566-1568, 1570-1572, 1574-1576, 1578-1580, 1582-1584, 1586-1588, 1590-1592, 1594-1596, 1598-1600, 1602-1604, 1606-1608, 1610-1612, 1614-1616, 1618-1620, 1622-1624, 1626-1628, 1630-1632, 1634-1636, 1638-1640, 1642-1644, 1646-1648, 1650-1652, 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2018-2020, 2022-2024, 2026-2028, 2030-2032, 2034-2036, 2038-2040, 2042-2044, 2046-2048, 2050-2052, 2054-2056, 2058-2060, 2062-2064, 2066-2068, 2070-2072, 2074-2076, 2078-2080, 2082-2084, 2086-2088, 2090-2092, 2094-2096, 2098-2100, 2102-2104, 2106-2108, 2110-2112, 2114-2116, 2118-2120, 2122-2124, 2126-2128, 2130-2132, 2134-2136, 2138-2140, 2142-2144, 2146-2148, 2150-2152, 2154-2156, 2158-2160, 2162-2164, 2166-2168, 2170-2172, 2174-2176, 2178-2180, 2182-2184, 2186-2188, 2190-2192, 2194-2196, 2198-2200, 2202-2204, 2206-2208, 2210-2212, 2214-2216, 2218-2220, 2222-2224, 2226-2228, 2230-2232, 2234-2236, 2238-2240, 2242-2244, 2246-2248, 2250-2252, 2254-2256, 2258-2260, 2262-2264, 2266-2268, 2270-2272, 2274-2276, 2278-2280, 2282-2284, 2286-2288, 2290-2292, 2294-2296, 2298-2300, 2302-2304, 2306-2308, 2310-2312, 2314-2316, 2318-2320, 2322-2324, 2326-2328, 2330-2332, 2334-2336, 2338-2340, 2342-2344, 2346-2348, 2350-2352, 2354-2356, 2358-2360, 2362-2364, 2366-2368, 2370-2372, 2374-2376, 2378-2380, 2382-2384, 2386-2388, 2390-2392, 2394-2396, 2398-2400, 2402-2404, 2406-2408, 2410-2412, 2414-2416, 2418-2420, 2422-2424, 2426-2428, 2430-2432, 2434-2436, 2438-2440, 2442-2444, 2446-2448, 2450-2452, 2454-2456, 2458-2460, 2462-2464, 2466-2468, 2470-2472, 2474-2476, 2478-2480, 2482-2484, 2486-2488, 2490-2492, 2494-2496, 2498-2500, 2502-2504, 2506-2508, 2510-2512, 2514-2516, 2518-2520, 2522-2524, 2526-2528, 2530-2532, 2534-2536, 2538-2540, 2542-2544, 2546-2548, 2550-2552, 2554-2556, 2558-2560, 2562-2564, 2566-2568, 2570-2572, 2574-2576, 2578-2580, 2582-2584, 2586-2588, 2590-2592, 2594-2596, 2598-2600, 2602-2604, 2606-2608, 2610-2612, 2614-2616, 2618-2620, 2622-2624, 2626-2628, 2630-2632, 2634-2636, 2638-2640, 2642-2644, 2646-2648, 2650-2652, 2654-2656, 2658-2660, 2662-2664, 2666-2668, 2670-2672, 2674-2676, 2678-2680, 2682-2684, 2686-2688, 2690-2692, 2694-2696, 2698-2700, 2702-2704, 2706-2708, 2710-2712, 2714-2716, 2718-2720, 2722-2724, 2726-2728, 2730-2732, 2734-2736, 2738-2740, 2742-2744, 2746-2748, 2750-2752, 2754-2756, 2758-2760, 2762-2764, 2766-2768, 2770-2772, 2774-2776, 2778-2780, 2782-2784, 2786-2788, 2790-2792, 2794-2796, 2798-2800, 2802-2804, 2806-2808, 2810-2812, 2814-2816, 2818-2820, 2822-2824, 2826-2828, 2830-2832, 2834-2836, 2838-2840, 2842-2844, 2846-2848, 2850-2852, 2854-2856, 2858-2860, 2862-2864, 2866-2868, 2870-2872, 2874-2876, 2878-2880, 2882-2884, 2886-2888, 2890-2892, 2894-2896, 2898-2900, 2902-2904, 2906-2908, 2910-2912, 2914-2916, 2918-2920, 2922-2924, 2926-2928, 2930-2932, 2934-2936, 2938-2940, 2942-2944, 2946-2948, 2950-2952, 2954-2956, 2958-2960, 2962-2964, 2966-2968, 2970-2972, 2974-2976, 2978-2980, 2982-2984, 2986-2988, 2990-2992, 2994-2996, 2998-3000, 3002-3004, 3006-3008, 3010-3012, 3014-3016, 3018-3020, 3022-3024, 3026-3028, 3030-3032, 3034-3036, 3038-3040, 3042-3044, 3046-3048, 3050-3052, 3054-3056, 3058-3060, 3062-3064, 3066-3068, 3070-3072, 3074-3076, 3078-3080, 3082-3084, 3086-3088, 3090-3092, 3094-3096, 3098-3100, 3102-3104, 3106-3108, 3110-3112, 3114-3116, 3118-3120, 3122-3124, 3126-3128, 3130-3132, 3134-3136, 3138-3140, 3142-3144, 3146-3148, 3150-3152, 3154-3156, 3158-3160, 3162-3164, 3166-3168, 3170-3172, 3174-3176, 3178-3180, 3182-3184, 3186-3188, 3190-3192, 3194-3196, 3198-3200, 3202-3204, 3206-3208, 3210-3212, 3214-3216, 3218-3220, 3222-3224, 3226-3228, 3230-3232, 3234-3236, 3238-3240, 3242-3244, 3246-3248, 3250-3252, 3254-3256, 3258-3260, 3262-3264, 3266-3268, 3270-3272, 3274-3276, 3278-3280, 3282-3284, 3286-3288, 3290-3292, 3294-3296, 3298-3300, 3302-3304, 3306-3308, 3310-3312, 3314-3316, 3318-3320, 3322-3324, 3326-3328, 3330-3332, 3334-3336, 3338-3340, 3342-3344, 3346-3348, 3350-3352, 3354-3356, 3358-3360, 3362-3364, 3366-3368, 3370-3372, 3374-3376, 3378-3380, 3382-3384, 3386-3388, 3390-3392, 3394-3396, 3398-3400, 3402-3404, 3406-3408, 3410-3412, 3414-3416, 3418-3420, 3422-3424, 3426-3428, 3430-3432, 3434-3436, 3438-3440, 3442-3444, 3446-3448, 3450-3452, 3454-3456, 3458-3460, 3462-3464, 3466-3468, 3470-3472, 3474-3476, 3478-3480, 3482-3484, 3486-3488, 3490-3492, 3494-3496, 3498-3500, 3502-3504, 3506-3508, 3510-3512, 3514-3516, 3518-3520, 3522-3524, 3526-3528, 3530-3532, 3534-3536, 3538-3540, 3542-3544, 3546-3548, 3550-3552, 3554-3556, 3558-3560, 3562-3564, 3566-3568, 3570-3572, 3574-3576, 3578-3580, 3582-3584, 3586-3588, 3590-3592, 3594-3596, 3598-3600, 3602-3604, 3606-3608, 3610-3612, 3614-3616, 3618-3620, 3622-3624, 3626-3628, 3630-3632, 3634-3636, 3638-3640, 3642-3644, 3646-3648, 3650-3652, 3654-3656, 3658-3660, 3662-3664, 3666-3668, 3670-3672, 3674-3676, 3678-3680, 3682-3684, 3686-3688, 3690-3692, 3694-3696, 3698-3700, 3702-3704, 3706-3708, 3710-3712, 3714-3716, 3718-3720, 3722-3724, 3726-3728, 3730-3732, 3734-3736, 3738-3740, 3742-3744, 3746-3748, 3750-3752, 3754-3756, 3758-3760, 3762-3764, 3766-3768, 3770-3772, 3774-3776, 3778-3780, 3782-3784, 3786-3788, 3790-3792, 3794-3796, 3798-3800, 3802-3804, 3806-3808, 3810-3812, 3814-3816, 3818-3820, 3822-3824, 3826-3828, 3830-3832, 3834-3836, 3838-3840, 3842-38

sport



COUNTDOWN TO THE 1997-98 FOOTBALL SEASON



From acorns, Oakwell grows

Glenn Moore charts the rise and rise of Bamsley, the Premiership's unlikely new boys

Last summer they warmed up for the new season by playing Wigan and finished it by losing 5-1 at Oxford United. This season they have prepared by hosting Santos of Brazil and will conclude with the visit of Manchester United.

Such is the pace of change at Barnsley, a club formerly noted only in Michael Parkinson's memories. On Saturday they become the 29th team, and possibly the least likely, to play in the Premiership when West Ham United arrive.

In 110 years, Barnsley have never been in the top flight and were getting gates below 4,000 four seasons ago. Like Port Vale and Grimsby, the only time they were mentioned in the same breath as the Premiership was as a threat to teams facing relegation.

No longer. From Adams to Zola, the very best are now heading for Oakwell and they will be pleasantly surprised by it. Since reluctantly and belatedly agreeing to adopt the Taylor Report five years ago Oakwell has been transformed. What was once an open barn, large but dated with barely 2,000 seats, is now an all-seater 19,000 arena which retains enough of the old memories to give it the edge over the new Meccano pre-fabs. It also has room to grow, being on one of the largest sites in the Premiership at 25 acres (Highbury is 10 acres).

The twin masters of this domain are the contrasting pair of John Dennis and Danny Wilson. Dennis is a big man in his mid-forties, the son of a former chairman, Yorkshire-born and a Barnsley fan since childhood. He has been known to leap about the directors' box, but is yet to become one of the moneyed chairmen who work at the club and look to the stock exchange. Away from match days he is busy running the family fruit-and-veg business.

Wilson, a decade younger and half a foot shorter, is a Lancastrian (though he played 24 times for Northern Ireland). Quieter and more



Promotion party: Barnsley's John Hendrie is chaired high as the club win a place in the Premiership last season

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

intense, he has been in the game since he was 16, playing under "about 15 managers" but being more influenced by 13 months under Brian Clough than anyone else.

It shows in his team's football. "Don't call us hating Barnsley," he has cautioned. "It makes us sound a bunch of thugs. Why not 'stylish Barnsley', for that's nearer the truth."

"You won't see us pumping long balls forward. We try to put on a show and that means playing the ball to feet. That was the style of football I was brought up on, what I want to see and what I think the public want to see." He appears to be right, with all 16,000 season tickets sold - the remaining 3,000 spaces are for away fans.

Not that the supporters were always keen. When Dennis

promoted Wilson to manager in 1994, after Viv Anderson had joined Bryan Robson at Middlesbrough, the club were concentrating on rebuilding the ground and Wilson had to manage with just inspiration and perspiration. Both men were criticised as the club slipped into the relegation zone with two wins in the first nine games and crowds below 4,000.

"The locals were playing hell," Wilson recalled. "I was a convenient scapegoat because I was still playing and for four months I was hammered."

However, the team finished 10th and sixth while the stands went up around them. Then, given a little cash to spend, Wilson looked abroad. He brought in Arjan de Zeeuw, a Dutch doctor, and Trinidad's Clint Marcelle. From Middles-

brough came John Hendrie and Paul Wilkinson further supplementing youngsters such as the England Under-21 goalkeeper, David Watson, and experienced pros like the skipper.

Rising without trace

Other minnows who made the big time

Club	Years in top flight
Blackburn	1906-11, 1976-80, 1975-77
Cardiff	1949-52, 1959-68
Fulham	1965-66
Wimbledon	1982-88
Wolves	1986-now

Neil Redfern. The mix worked: Barnsley won the first five matches and have rarely looked back.

But now comes the Premiership. "I can't wait to go to places like Old Trafford and Anfield," Wilson said. "I'm going to learn a lot and we'll give a good account of ourselves. I believe we can stay up. We have good bonding and a little bit of skill."

How quickly the newcomers - the Macedonian striker Georgi Hristov, German Lars Leese, Ales Krizan, a Slovenian, and South African's Eric Tinkler - settle could be crucial. Good luck with injuries will also be required if Barnsley are to justify the local slogan "It's just like watching Brazil".

Simply by getting to the Premiership Barnsley have struck a

blow for all those clubs held in thinly veiled contempt by the Premiership barons. They are proof that, with good husbandry and smart management, "small" clubs can earn the right to tangle with the best. It will be good for the game if they survive, but even if they do not one hopes Wilson will stick to his principles and ultimately prosper.

And that Dennis, who was once censured for hurrying into the referee's room and berating Ray Lewis ("I felt a right prat when I got there"), will still find the time and perspective to pull a pint for the official and his assistants before delivering it personally - still in the glass.

Mind, if it's the local brew, Timothy Taylor's award-winning Landlord, Dennis should be careful. It might constitute a bribe.

Confessions of a nostalgic Spurs fan



Despite becoming the Everton of London, David Aaronovitch sees some hope for Tottenham supporters. Well, sort of

At the moment you can get odds of between 33 and 40 to 1 against Tottenham winning the Premiership this season - and that hurts. But why should it? Except for two years at the beginning of the Sixties, Spurs have never dominated British football in the way that - at different times - Liverpool, Man Utd or Leeds have. The club hasn't matched Arsenal for consistency. They, Aston Villa, Nottingham Forest and Everton have all won the championship since we last did. That's the history, so what's my problem now?

Well, for one, it's the manner of the thing. Spurs at their best, were a "Cup team" in the best sense. In both the 70s and 80s, for instance, we won three of 'em, and appeared in two other finals. And we did it all with style, which was something that Arsenal never had. Style, you see, never prospered there: whether in the shape of Charlie Nicholas or Alan Hudson. Like an exotic plant in a barren back yard, it always withered in the face of Arsenal's relentless defensiveness, its co-ordinated ordinariness.

Arsenal won more, but we were the team to see. Out of the dreadful period of the mid-Seventies, were born teams with flair, with élan. Ardiles and Villa came to Spurs. We spawned Glenn Hoddle, and we bought Paul Gascoigne and Chris Waddle. Gary Lineker, at the height of his powers, chose White Hart Lane; Darren Anderton turned United down. And above all, there was Jürgen, his one season at the club like a glorious holiday romance with the most intelligent

Dalglish's spending this month, and Blackburn's recent near demise, both suggest that sugar-daddy funding for football clubs can only last so long. Sugar's insistence on running Tottenham properly makes sense. When the money is available, he is prepared to stump up.

Which has left many wondering whether the man who saved us back in '94, Gerry Francis, has the ambition and wit to spend it. At Highbury, Arsène Wenger - like Chelsea's Gullit - is connected to the magical world of European football: to Monaco, to Milan, to the maestro nurseries of France, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands, to truly international clubs. Gerry, however, is connected to QPR and Bristol Rovers, and he seems to like it safe. That's why he buys players he has already worked with. What he doesn't seem to like is to deal with established international stars, who owe him precisely nothing.

The other problem with Gerry is that he is a miserable old git. He moans all the bloody time, about players leaving and players getting injured. True, last season he has plenty to be miserable about. Mabbutt broke his leg on day one, Armstrong was effectively out from match four, Anderton had another wasted season having keyhole surgery on anything large enough to make a keyhole in. We would buy players to replace crooked players, only to see them limp off forever, and that would make Gerry even more miserable. I became convinced that some players got hurt just to avoid having to listen to Gerry being miserable. Footballers prefer jolly - ask Tel.

Meanwhile, Gianfranco Zola, offered at one time, according to rumours, to Spurs, won the Cup with Chelsea, and all of a sudden we were looking at Tottenham becoming London's third team. If there should ever be a Euro-cup, we realised, then our team - with its smallest stadium - would probably not be in it. That's when the moaning really began. No, sorry, that's wrong. Spurs fans have always moaned. This was worse, for some of them had stopped moaning and begun to die. When Teddy Sheringham left, the cause seemed completely lost. No one would come to us: we were the Everton of London.

But Sol Campbell signed a new contract, then Les and Gollini were signed, and our hearts lifted momentarily. Meanwhile, in the last hours before the new season starts, we are waiting expectantly for our Zola to be signed. Any day now Alessandro Del Piero will step on to Alan Sugar's yacht, and the tide will turn. Even if he doesn't, hope still contends with resignation in any fan's heart - so tomorrow I am going to Ladbrokes to place £100 at 40 to 1. And if everyone's fit, a team of Walker, Seales, Campbell, Vega, Neilson, Howells, Ginola, Armstrong, Anderton, Ferdinand and Iversen, with Sinton on the bench, could give anyone a run for their money. Though, at 33 to 1, I'm not so sure.

Dalglish tempted by £6m Montella

ALAN NIXON

Kenny Dalglish is preparing to take the Sampdoria striker Vincenzo Montella to Newcastle United as a replacement for the injured Alan Shearer.

Dalglish saw Montella in action for his club against Derby County on Monday night and could be the first to test the Serie A outfit's willingness to sell their top scorer of last season. Montella will be rated at £6m to £7m.

One player already recruited by Dalglish is the Republic of Ireland goalkeeper Shay Given. He will cost Newcastle £1.5m from Blackburn, a Football Association tribunal ruled yesterday.

The tribunal also fixed Kyle Lighthorpe's transfer fee for his move from Walsall to Coventry at £500,000, plus £50,000 after 20 first-team appearances and then 30 per cent of any profit made by Coventry should they sell him.

The tribunal judged further that the goalkeeper John Filan will cost Blackburn £700,000 from Coventry. In two other cases, Wrexham must pay £65,000 for the Shrewsbury defender Dean Spink, 30, while the Wigan defender John Pender, 33, will cost Rochdale £11,500.

Blackburn have signed Aberdeen goalkeeper Michael Watt on loan as emergency cover while Tim Flowers recovers from a hernia operation.

Oriundo Trustfull has moved from Sheffield Wednesday to Vitesse Arnhem for £300,000. Regi Blinker's move from Wednesday to Celtic is expected to be confirmed today, but whether Paolo Di Canio will be going in the opposite direction is uncertain. One Celtic player who did leave yesterday was the forward Chris Hay, 22. He moved to Swindon for £330,000.

Sunderland signed the Marcellus defender Chris Makin for £500,000. Bolton are trying to sign Marcellus' striker, Marc Libbra.

Home Office red tape is delaying the arrival of three Australians to Portsmouth. Goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac and midfielders Robbie Enns and Craig Foster are still seeking work permits.

WEEKEND POOLS FORECAST

FA Cup	
1. Barnsley v West Ham	1
2. Blackburn v Derby	2
3. Coventry v Chelsea	3
4. Everton v Crystal Palace	4
5. Leeds v Arsenal	5
6. Leicester v Aston Villa	6
7. Newcastle v Sheffield Wed	7
8. Southampton v Bolton	8
9. Wimbledon v Liverpool	9
Playing Sunday: Tottenham v Manchester United	
Nationwide League	
10. Birmingham v Stoke	1
11. Bradford v Stockport	2
12. Bury v Reading	3
13. Man City v Portsmouth	4
14. Middlesbrough v Charlton	5
15. Norwich v Wolverhampton	6
16. Oxford Utd v Huddersfield	7
17. Port Vale v Nottm Forest	8
18. QPR v Ipswich	9
19. Swindon v Crewe	10
20. West Brom v Tranmere	11
Playing Sunday: Sheffield United v Sunderland	
Second Division	
21. Blackpool v Luton	1
22. Bristol Rovers v Plymouth	2
23. Chesterfield v Walsol	3
24. Fulham v Wrexham	4
25. Gillingham v Preston	5
26. Grimsby v Accrington	6
27. Millwall v Brentford	7
28. Northampton v Southampton	8
29. Oldham v York	9
30. Southend v Carlisle	10
31. Watford v Burnley	11
32. Wigan v Wycombe	12
Third Division	
33. Chester v Lincoln	1
34. Colchester v Darlington	2
35. Exeter v Hartlepool	3
36. Leyton Orient v Carlisle	4
37. Macclesfield v Torquay	5
38. Mansfield v Hull	6
39. Notts County v Rochdale	7
40. Peterborough v Southend	8
41. Rotherham v Barnet	9
42. Scarbrough v Cambridge Utd	10
43. Stevenage v Doncaster	11
44. Swaleas v Brighton	12
Scottish Coca-Cola Cup	
Second Round	
45. Dundee v Inverness	1
46. Dundee v Inverness	2
47. Greenock Morton v Arbroath	3
48. Livingston v Hearts	4
49. Partick v Stirling	5
Also playing (not on our website): Hibernian v Alloa, Motherwell v Inverness, Celtic v Celtic (at Tynecastle Park), Dunfermline v Aberdeen, Dundee v East Stirling, Queen of the South v Dundee United, Raith Rovers v Forth, Ross County v Falkirk, St Johnstone v Clyde, St Mirren v Clydehill, Scottish League Challenge Cup first round: Stranraer v Arbroath	
Four draws: Leeds United v Arsenal, Queen's Park Rangers v Ipswich Town, Exeter City v Hartlepool United, Milton v Aldershot	
Five away: Liverpool, Wolverhampton Wanderers, Nottingham Forest, Preston North End, Barnet	
Ten home: Everton, Newcastle United, Birmingham City, Manchester City, Middlesbrough, Fulham, Leyton Orient, Macclesfield, Dunfermline, Partick Thistle	

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سكزا من الامم

Shake-up wins some approval

David Llewellyn canvasses opinion on the Board's blueprint for the future of cricket, unveiled at Lord's yesterday

There would have been a lot of quiet commuters heading back to the shires last night, their heads buried in the 32 pages of the England and Wales Cricket Board's "Blueprint for the Future Playing Structure of Cricket".

The consensus was one of approval tempered with caution. Somerset's chief executive, Peter Anderson, emerged from the 70-minute presentation at Lord's and said: "I'm a bit shell-shocked. But I thought it was an innovative presentation, with some pretty good ideas."

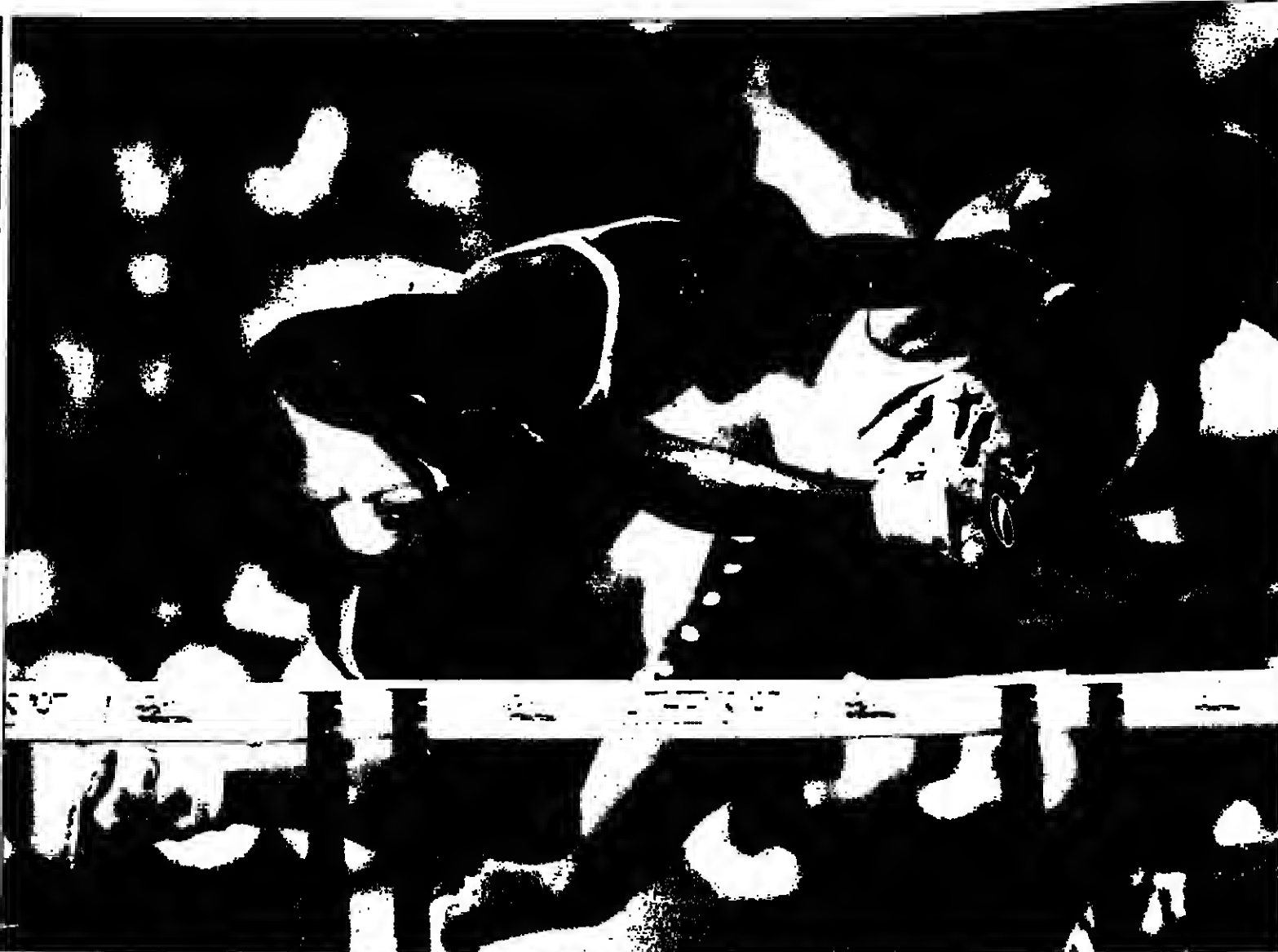
"What worries me are the costs — as a smaller club we are worried about our income level. One of the most radical things is a proposed reduction in Championship cricket, which worries me. But the increase in one-day cricket appeals."

There were no such misgivings from the bigger clubs. Bob Bennett, the chairman at Old Trafford, said: "I am delighted with the report."

The Surrey chief executive, Paul Sheldon, was more subdued, adding: "Although a two-division championship was preferable to us, a three-division structure and the merging of the Sunday League and Benson and Hedges Cup certainly gives the appearance that we will be fighting for a lot longer in the season."

Yorkshire's chief executive, Chris Hassell, said: "It is more radical than I had expected. Once you get into the detail of the proposals you can see much in their favour."

One or two delegates were reluctant to say anything before they had had time to study the implications. The Worcester-



Colin Jackson in action during the second round of the 110 metres hurdles in Athens yesterday

Photograph: Alistair

Edwards leaps into the unknown

Athletics
MIKE ROWBOTTOM
reports from Athens

Jonathan Edwards, Britain's only defending world champion, takes what he describes as "a step into the dark" today as he attempts in qualification for Friday's triple jump final.

In response to the obvious question — was he fully recovered from the head injury which has prevented him jumping for five weeks? — he replied: "I guess we'll find out tomorrow."

Edwards, who had delayed his arrival here until Monday night, appeared tense and cautious as he faced the press yesterday — as well he might. Since injuring himself at the European Cup, and exacerbating the problem at the Sheffield Grand Prix on 29 June, the 31-year-old world record holder has not managed a single triple jump.

He completed a few efforts off a short approach last week, which he said had not adversely affected him. But in boxing terms, he is a champ defending his belt without any sparring.

Before coming to Athens Edwards, whose leap of 17.74m at the European Cup leads this year's world rankings, adopted a fatalistic approach. "Right now I'm in cotton wool. Next month, I won't care about the pain. So what if I can't walk the next day?"

Things have improved since. Up to a point, "I am aware of my heel, but I am not in constant pain," said Edwards, who will wear protective cups inside his shoes today.

Perhaps protection for his psyche might be just as useful to him. "If you feel there is something wrong with you, it will carry on in your mind a lot longer than physically," he said yesterday. "You need competition to get confidence."

When he gets that today, he will be hoping for one good effort to see him through. Looking ahead to the final he named Kenny Harrison, the man who beat him in last year's Olympics, as the man to beat again. "At our bests I think Kenny Harrison and I are a reasonable bit ahead of the rest of the world."

But how close to his best will Edwards be? What is sure is that he approaches these championships in a very different frame of mind to those in Gothenburg two years ago. Then, with two stupendous, wind-assisted jumps behind him and a legal world record of 17.98, he was desperate to bear his talent through to the finals.

He succeeded beyond all expectation, with the first legal jump over 18 metres. Asked if he was confident about defending his title, he smiled away from the word. "I feel very positive about it," he said. "I'm looking forward to it." It could mean anything.

Bentley hits the buffers

Rugby League

John Bentley, who returned from a successful Lions tour to boost Halifax's flagging World Club Championship hopes, is unlikely to play rugby league again this season.

The 30-year-old winger ended up in hospital after being hurt in a tackle during Monday night's match against Brisbane Broncos at Thurru Hall.

The injury, diagnosed as rib cartilage damage, is expected to keep him out of action for three to four weeks.

Halifax have four Super League matches left, plus the end-of-season play-offs, and

Bentley, due to rejoin the rugby union club Newcastle in September, had not written off his chances of a return.

"I don't usually do too badly with injuries," he said. "If it heals speedily, I am keen to have another game."

Halifax also lost their utility back, Craig Dean, and the captain, Karl Harrison, through injury as they were humbled 54-10 by Brisbane.

The Super League campaign resumed last night when London Broncos, safely through to October's quarter-finals of the World Club Championship, were due to take on relegation-threatened Oldham at the Stoop.

The Broncos have their sights on the championship runners-up position, but they could also help determine the battle to avoid the drop, for last night's game is followed on Friday by a trip to Castleford, where are next to bottom.

Oldham were boosted by the return to fitness of the full-back, Paul Atcheson while the London coach, Tony Currie, who ended speculation about his future by signing a two-year contract, decided not to risk Shaun Edwards from the start. The veteran half-back, still bothered by a hamstring problem, was on the bench as Robbie Beasley started a third successive match in a different position.

Schumann toasts success

Sailing
STUART ALEXANDER
reports from Cowes

Britain were in equal fifth place in the Admiral's Cup yesterday in Christchurch Bay as another spate of protests was keeping the international jury busy here last night.

The Americans held on to their lead despite their big boat, Flash Gordon, losing the bowman, David Navin, overboard at the bottom of the sixth leg of the first of the day's two races.

Navin was picked up after a couple of minutes, but the American boat finished last. Then, to add insult to injury, the

New Zealand boat Numbers announced they were to protest. Russell Coutts, the Kiwi skipper who won that race, hoped to dispute the overall lead with the Americans by the end of the day, but he, too, had problems in the second race, sailed in a 10 to 16 knot easterly and some chilling rain. His first hoist, after a disappointing blow apart, and he later took a headsail for a time.

The performance of the day, however, came from Germany. A pre-start libation of dry sherry poured into the water by the 80-year-old owner Hans-Otto Schumann seemed to spur his Rubin, skippered by Jochen Schumann, to greater success.

But the additional damage was done by Thomas Friesse's Mumm 36, I Punkt, who found some of her World Championship-winning form to score a first and a second place and put Germany second overall by three-eighths of a point over the New Zealanders.

Britain, stung after two successful protests on Monday had pushed them from second to fourth, still had reasons to cheer. They came from John Merricks and Ian Walker, who won the second race in the Mumm 36 class, and Chris Law, Law steered Graham Walker's Crown Indulgence to second in the same rubber. Merricks and Walker also led the first race, only to slip to fifth, and Tony Buckingham's 40-footer, Easy Oars, looking short of firepower, was further hit in the first race by tearing a sail they needed for the second.

Despite the cancellation of 16 classes for fear of severe squalls and the abandonment of two more after starting, the Melges 24 and Etchells, the sponsors Skandia Life announced it would back the event for two more years, at about £350,000 a year.

For those who did race in the miserable conditions, John Caullett's Maxima was rewarded with victory over the Ericsson 80s and Mike Slade's Longhairs in the Maxi race around Nab Tower.

TODAY'S NUMBER

20,488

The average attendance at French First Division football matches last weekend — the first time the 20,000 mark has been passed for one round of matches.

Men

400 metres final

1 Michael Johnson (USA) 44.32

2 David Moninger (USA) 44.39

3 Yohan Blake (Jamaica) 44.47

4 Richard Thompson (USA) 44.51

5 Thomas (USA) 44.52

6 A Peterson (USA) 44.52

110 metres hurdles final (first 5 in each heat plus 2 fastest losers to second heat)

1 Michael Johnson (USA) 1:52.52

2 Steve Skelly (USA) 1:52.52

3 Steve Skelly (USA) 1:52.52

4 Steve Skelly (USA) 1:52.52

5 Steve Skelly (USA) 1:52.52

6 Steve Skelly (USA) 1:52.52

Women

1500 metres final

1 Doreen Sweeney (Ireland) 4:04.24

2 Doreen Sweeney (Ireland) 4:04.24

3 Doreen Sweeney (Ireland) 4:04.24

4 Doreen Sweeney (Ireland) 4:04.24

5 Doreen Sweeney (Ireland) 4:04.24

6 Doreen Sweeney (Ireland) 4:04.24

Baseball

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Pittsburgh 6 Atlanta 5

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE: Kansas City 6 New York 5

2nd round: 1. Kansas City 6 New York 5

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THE INDEPENDENT

INTERNATIONAL

LIVE COMMENTARY

0891 881 485

COUNTY

ROUND UP

0891 525 075

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Hallett's exit looks ominous for Rowell

Rugby Union
DAVID LLEWELLYN

Tony Hallett's resignation from the post of acting chief executive of the Rugby Football Union was not a surprise, coming in the wake of that of the treasurer, Colin Hurrell, who stepped down after last month's annual meeting in London. The last of the old guard is the England coach, Jack Rowell.

The national playing committee, under the chairmanship of the former England captain Bill Beaumont, are holding a series of meetings this month and a decision is expected shortly. Rowell's contract expires on 31 August and the prospects for the former Bath coach are not good.

After the embittered outpourings of the last 18 months, Hallett's departure was an amicable affair. The public perception was that there was a clash of personalities between Cliff Brittle, the chairman of the newly constituted management board, and Hallett. Both men denied that it boiled down to that although they admitted there were differences between them.

Hallett said: "Cliff Brittle and I might have gone on arguing. The unity and the sanctity of the game is far more important."

He came to his decision while on holiday in the United States, but he had spoken at length to Brittle about the alternatives. For the former Royal Navy captain there was only one honourable thing to do: fall on his sword.

"Cliff was elected. I was selected," Hallett said. "I had really made up my mind to go before my holiday. I am sad to go but I know I am leaving the game in good hands. The last six months have been difficult. There were areas of conflict and I was a part of that."

Hallett will not be leaving Twickenham straight away, but the discussions about a successor begin today and Brittle is no doubt about the sort of replacement he wants. "He will have to be a hard-headed businessman. When the game went professional in 1995 it was still being run by amateurs."

Brittle and the president, Peter Brook, paid tribute to what had been achieved in Hallett's time at Twickenham. Before being appointed secretary in 1995 he spent 16 years on the committee and oversaw the financing and rebuilding of Twickenham.

"That will be a memorial to Tony," Brook said, a sentiment echoed by Brittle who will ask the RFU council to accord Hallett privileged membership which would give him unlimited access to the ground. "He is welcome here any time," Brittle added. "I do not regard Tony's resignation as a victory. Now we must go forward positively."

Like watching Brazil
Glenn Moore looks at the rise and
rise of Barnsley, page 22

sport

Confessions of a Spurs fan
David Aaronovitch sees a glimmer of
hope for the Everton of London, page 22

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS: Johnson recovers his form as Americans outclass Britain's trio of 400 metre finalists

Backley spears silver on last throw

MIKE ROWBOTTOM
reports from Athens

Steve Backley, who normally makes his mark on major javelin competitions with the first throw, left it until his last here last night to earn Britain's second silver medal of the World Championships.

Backley's late flourish, which was enough to defeat all but the surprise South African winner Marius Corbett, had the unfortunate side-effect of knocking his friend and training partner, Mick Hill, out of the bronze medal position. "I'm as sick as a flock of parrots," Hill said.

Britain's trio of 400 metres runners also experienced that let-down feeling after failing to gain a medal in a final won, as expected, by the defending champion, Michael Johnson.

Mark Richardson ran a personal best of 44.47sec in fourth place, with Iwan Thomas dropping back to sixth in 44.52 after a fast start and Jamie Baulch finishing last in 45.22.

Backley, who had begun the evening in search of the global gold which he said he needed to round off his achievements in his event, looked for most of the evening as if he would come away empty-handed. His first throw, on which he had pinned such hope, was only 82.94m. His face said everything about his disappointment. Last summer in Atlanta a big opening effort had been enough to secure silver, as only Ian Zelezný managed to beat it.

Zelezný also, to general amazement, came away with nothing, no-throwing twice and then failing to make the cut of

the final three throws with his only recorded effort of 82.04.

Hill put himself into the silver medal position early on with throws of 84.48 and 86.34. But the competition was ultimately won by a startling second-round throw of 88.40m by the 21-year-old student Corbett.

World junior champion in 1994, Corbett was injured last year and not regarded even with in South Africa as a medal prospect. His winning distance was an improvement of 10 metres in the space of a season. His best up until 1996 was 77.98, a distance he threw in 1994. This year he had managed 83.90 at altitude.

Earlier this season, Zelezný invited Corbett to throw in a high school meeting at Stellenbosch. Zelezný threw over 94 metres to lead the world's standings this year. Perhaps something rubbed off on the student.

The atmosphere in the stadium was predictably partisan as the Greek thrower Kostas Gatzidouis sought to match the

South African's prodigious effort. He managed 86.64, which proved enough to earn bronze and a rapturous reception.

Backley, who appeared to be getting increasingly discomfited, earned his medal with a final effort of 86.30. From a competitive point of view it was one of his finest efforts. Whether he will regard it as a silver gained or a gold lost remains to be seen. "He did the business again," Hill said. "In the long run I'm sure he'll be disappointed, but he's actually highly delighted now because he almost ended up with nothing."

Backley had mixed feelings: "I was absolutely delighted to have stuffed the Greek with the last throw," he said. But he complained that the Greek officials had started his clock going before giving him his javelin on two of his six throws. "It made me mad and that doesn't suit me."

Hill showed his disappointment by flinging away his throwing belt after his last effort. Until

Backley's intervention, he had seemed ready to earn another world bronze to go with the one he won in 1993 following the disqualification of the third-placed man for a doping offence.

Thomas, who like Richardson has been receiving treatment for a nagging injury behind his knee, made a characteristically brave attempt to keep in touch with the defending 400m champion, going off very fast.

As the field turned into the final straight, the fair hair of Thomas, who was in lane two, appeared for a heady moment to be level with Johnson, but he could not maintain his momentum. First the champion, then Davis Camoga, Uganda's Olympic bronze medalist, then Tyree Washington, America's new kid on the blocks, came past him. Johnson was timed at 44.12, with Camoga second in 44.37 and Washington third in 44.39.

"I maybe went too hard for 300 metres but I've lost a bit of fitness recently and I couldn't hang on," Thomas said. "At least I gave it 100 per cent. I missed almost 10 days of training prior to this so I maybe lost the edge. But I am proud of myself for showing the guts to go for it. I planned to catch Johnson. I thought I could hold him off, but it wasn't to be."

Richardson was dejected. "I ran a personal best. I ran a very good race. A PB should be satisfying, but at the moment it's disappointing. Coming fourth is probably the worst position to come. I really thought I could get a medal. I ran the best race I possibly could. Normally bronze is won in about 44.50. That shows what a tough standard it was."

Results, page 23



Steve Backley, on his way to the silver medal in the men's javelin in Athens yesterday

Photograph: Allsport

Lewis thanks her mother

Denise Lewis plans to use her biggest pay-day to thank her mother for the life-long sacrifices that helped the British heptathlete win silver in Athens.

Lewis pocketed £18,000 after winning Britain's first medal in the World Championships while her mother, Joan, watched from the stands.

Now it is pay-back time for Lewis who, when asked what she would do with her prize money, said: "I can help my mother pay off the mortgage. That would be nice."

"She has always been so strong. She's my best friend as well as my biggest supporter. It's good to know that she is there in the stands watching me."

Lewis' medal exploits have been carefully documented in scrapbooks by her proud mother. "Sometimes she will get them out and say, 'Did my little Denise do that,'" the heptathlete said.

Clarity the victim as vision of future is unveiled

DEREK PRINGLE

Cricket Correspondent

The future of English cricket was outlined yesterday, but its proposals have not so much heralded a Bright New Dawn as a foggy compromise, particularly where first-class cricket is concerned. As this is where the power in the game lies, Lord MacLaurin and his team will have to wait until 15 September before knowing whether their plan will be accepted or not.

Plans, such as the Murray and Acland Reports, have been consigned to the dustbin before and, although many of the county representatives appeared mollified by its content, there will be five weeks of lobbying to ensure it has every chance of survival.

Delivered under the banner

"Raising the Standard," MacLaurin's blueprint has set about streamlining the game from the grass-roots up, so that talented youngsters can follow a well-established path to the top. But although its scope is admirable, its clarity is not, and one cannot envisage a new-look County Championship which revolves around three conferences, with the teams in each conference not playing one another, pulling in renewed support from a sceptical public.

Indeed it is primarily at the top end of the game where the change has been most convoluted. The Championship, as old, if not quite as widely revered as the Queen Mother, will now be decided after 14 matches or 56 days' cricket, 12 more than in Australia's Sheffield Shield.

If accepted, the system will be

in operation next season, with the composition of the new conferences determined by a complex system of seeding and regional bias from finishing positions the previous year. In its favour, it is true that the proposed system might provide more meaningful cricket later in the season, and give the players 12 fewer days of cricket than the current system.

Even more puzzling, given that one-day cricket was seen by many as the devil in cricket's midst, is the revamp of the one-day programme. With the Benson and Hedges Cup as well as the Sunday League due to be phased out after next year, a fifty over competition known as the National League will be started as a two-division competition, with promotion and relegation, and with the divisions decided by the finishing

Main proposals in blueprint

- Establish a three-conference County Championship, with an enhanced primary structure to increase competitiveness.
- Introduce in 1999 a two-division, 50-over National League with promotion and relegation to supersede the Sunday League and the Benson and Hedges Cup.
- Extend the NatWest Trophy to allow more non-first-class teams the chance to progress further in the game.
- Reduce first-class county staffs to allow more resources the opportunity to progress further in the game.
- Wind down the first-class counties' second XI programme and seek to introduce by year 2000 a fully integrated championship to operate as a feeder competition.

- Establish selected universities in addition to Oxford and Cambridge as centres of excellence.
- Introduce a new development game so that more young people can experience a form of cricket at secondary schools.
- Make county boards responsible for inter-school cricket, limited and organised with schools and other local agencies.
- Ensure that county boards co-ordinate all other county representative cricket.
- Extend the two-day grade format to all under-27 and under-19 county cricket.
- Establish a national network of premier leagues for the top club sides by the start of the 1999 season.
- Create a new national knock-out competition for premier league clubs.

positions in next season's AXA Sunday League.

The one-day programme will involve each team playing those in its own division twice and the sides in the other division once - a total of 25 games. With the NatWest to remain, though as a 50-over knock-out with an increased scope of 60 teams (like

football's FA Cup), most county sides will in fact be playing more one-day cricket and not less.

The reason for this is that one-day cricket is seen as the game's provider. As a former businessman, MacLaurin is keen for counties to have the means to be more financially self-sufficient. To that end, counties will be

given a certain freedom to hold their National League matches when they see fit, which could include having them on weekdays under lights or at weekends.

It is even feasible that little festivals of one-day cricket could take place over bank holiday weekends. But if the financial aspect is enticing, the logistics may provide problems as teams shuffle their fixtures to maximise their gain.

Where the plan does have great merit is in attempting to improve the feeder system for talented players into the first-class game. By 2000, the current county second XI's, as well as the minor counties, will play in a 38-team County Board competition played over two days. Crucially this will also provide scope for the best club players to find a way into the first-class game without having

to commit themselves to professional cricket until they are perhaps ready to do so.

However, as Lord MacLaurin later stressed, there is no quick fix as far as cricket is concerned. "Changing the structure is not enough," he said. "Cricket is about people, the players the spectators, the groundsman. It is they who will determine the success of this document. We have got to build foundations up if we are to raise standards. This is a foundation and is by no means the limit of our ambition."

In presenting the proposals

MacLaurin gave a slick performance, one that appeared as well rehearsed as it was researched. But, for all the hard work and carefully pitched arguments, it appears unnecessarily overwrought, considering Tim Lamb's concern that "Football is capturing the middle classes."

Football is popular because it is a simple game played within a simple system. By contrast it is difficult not to see cricket as a game whose complexity has just been made even more impenetrable by this plan.

Reaction, page 23

Jayasuriya poised to pass Lara's Test record

TONY COZIER

reports from Colombo
India 537 for 8 dec
Sri Lanka 587 for 1

Sri Lanka, already kings of the one-day game, are confidently waiting to crown one of their own as the new king of Test batting when the first Test against India resumes today.

Sanath Jayasuriya, the devastating left-handed opener who featured so prominently in their World Cup triumph last year, resumes at 326, only 50 away from the most coveted individual record in Test cricket, the 375 made by another left-hander, the West Indian Brian Lara against England in Antigua just over three years ago.

They are opening the gates at the imposing Premadasa Stadium free for the final day in the full expectation that Jayasuriya will achieve his goal. He has so far batted 12 hours 55 minutes without either a blip or a break in his paradise of a pitch on which 1,124 runs have been scored for nine wickets. The Indian bowling is uncomplicated and dispirited and there is no reason, except sheer mental and physical exhaustion, why Jayasuriya should not pass even Lara's other incredible standard, the overall first-class mark of 501.

It has been a marathon effort of skill and endurance by himself and his solid partner Roshan Mahanama who became the first pair in the long history of Test cricket to bat through two successive uninterrupted days. Mahanama, who joined Jayasuriya at the start of the third morning, was 211 at close, having shared the highest stand for any wicket in Tests, a monumental 548.

The enormity of Jayasuriya's achievement has been enhanced by the fact that he has been on the field for every ball.

His left-arm spin earned him his best figures in Tests, 3 for 45, while India accumulated their mammoth 537 for 8 declared over the first two days. He then padded up to start Sri Lanka's reply as the shadows lengthened on the second afternoon and has been in the middle ever since.

His intent has been clear all the way through. He has abandoned his six-hitting mode that makes him so dangerous in the

one-day game to such an extent that he did not allow himself the liberty of a six until he was 291 and had faced 517 balls.

Only once has he been close to dismissal, at 265 when Australian umpire Steve Randell refused a justifiable lbw appeal off Chaudhary.

Throughout the day records fell with the regularity of ripe mangoes. The more notable were Aravinda de Silva's 267 against New Zealand in Wellington that had stood as Sri Lanka's highest individual Test score since 1991, Sri Lanka's highest Test total, 547 for 8 declared against Australia here in 1992 and the best stand for any wicket in Tests, 467 between the New Zealanders Andrew Jones and Martin Crowe in the 1991 Wellington Test against Sri Lanka in which De Silva responded with his 267. All will fade into temporary obscurity should Jayasuriya reach his cherished goal today.

Previous record Test partnerships: 487 A H Jones (288) & M Crowe (289) New Zealand v Sri Lanka (Wellington 1990-91); 485 W H Edwards (289) & D G Bradman (244) Australia v England (The Oval 1934); 484 M Ghouse (231) & Javed Miandad (251) Pakistan v India (Hyderabad 1982-83); 446 C O Harris (260) & G S Sobers (265) West Indies v Pakistan (Karachi 1957-58); 423 V Manjand (235) & Pankaj Roy (173) India v New Zealand (Madras 1955-56).

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 3370 Wednesday 6 August By Aquila

Across

- Bank clerk to dismiss (7)
- Most reviled player of football team at home (7)
- Engorged, as with light spray (5)
- Buy goods to haffle factory workers (4-5)
- A tonic a la mode in Spanish region (9)
- Delight in August, often (5)
- One who drinks a lot, right after fish (5)
- Somehow, inn causes irritations (9)
- Overalls brownish-grey with grease, perhaps (9)
- Mark, about four, is a bit off course (5)
- Water coming from here in France? Still? (5)

Down

- As girl's husbandman, his spirit falls slowly (9)
- Mate endlessly having knowledge of porcelain (9)
- Charter the French sea-trip (5)
- Plaques denoting battles, vandalised (7)
- Child, attempt to swallow drug, walking with unsteady gait (7)
- Not the original article on jazz-fan (7)
- Secure clasp needed if any pets wander (6-3)
- Lily playing long pastoral piece (5)
- In one-star accommodation in Old Mount, we hear (9)
- Bowed lady (5)

Tuesday's Solution

1. BANKRUPT 2. HOMELESS 3. GORGED 4. BARGAIN 5. TONIC 6. DELIGHT 7. DRINKER 8. SOMEHOW 9. OVERALLS 10. MARK 11. WATER 12. FISH 13. SOMEHOW 14. INN 15. IRRITATIONS 16. OVERALLS 17. GREASE 18. MARK 19. WATER 20. FISH 21. WATER 22. FISH 23. SOMEHOW 24. INN 25. IRRITATIONS 26. OVERALLS 27. GREASE 28. MARK 29. WATER 30. FISH

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